

Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder
The Humanist as Orator



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Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder
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JOHN M. McMANAMON, S. J.

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For my brothers:



Tom, Dave, and Pat

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Preface

My research for several years has focused upon a key member of the third generation of humanists, Pierpaolo Vergerio the elder (ca. 1369-1444). Modern interest in Vergerio was spurred in a decisive way by Leonardo Smith who published his exhaustive edition of the humanist's correspondence in 1934. Smith's dogged search for materials from the life of Vergerio has remained a departure point for other scholars. Interest in Vergerio was renewed some thirty years after Smith, when Hans Baron and Eugenio Garin analyzed certain of his works as part of a wider appraisal of civic humanism and the crisis of the early Italian Renaissance. David Robey then engaged in mild polemic with Baron's interpretation of the thought of Vergerio. Robey justly broadened Baron's perspectives on Vergerio by taking into account the whole of his corpus. However, Robey has consistently emphasized the traditional character of Vergerio's positions. My approach stresses his originality. Vergerio's career and writings influenced the development of the young movement in several areas: its epistemology, ideology, educational curriculum, emphasis on ethos, and its relationship to the university, to political authority, to religious belief, and to the visual arts. By emphasizing public service through oratory, Vergerio supplied a new matrix for Italian humanism.

This biography will be supplemented by a second volume, which will contain a critical edition of Vergerio's panegyrics of Saint Jerome and an English translation of those works. In Latin citations for the biography, I have used the same criteria that I have employed in the edition of the panegyrics. The virtual absence of autograph material by Vergerio makes it impossible to reconstruct his Latin orthography.

Therefore, the orthography in the Latin citations has been standardized using the norms in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Modern standards have been used as well for punctuation and capitalization. Angular brackets < > indicate letters, words, or passages added to the text on the belief that something was omitted in the course of transmission; square brackets [] indicate editorial deletions from the transmitted text. To make the volume as autonomous as possible, I decided to err on the side of inclusiveness when citing Vergerio's works, even those published in modern times.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the assistance that I have received in bringing this book to completion. My primary debts are to the institutions which funded the research and to the libraries which facilitated it. I thank Gladys Kriebel Delmas and the Foundation she has established for Venetian Research; her generosity has aided many scholars in studying the gamut of issues evoked by that most evocative of cities. I am likewise grateful to Loyola University of Chicago for paid research leaves that offered me that greatest of academic benefits: time to concentrate on a single project. While working in Venice, I enjoyed the hospitality of the Jesuit Research Institute. This book owes a great deal to that Institute and its founders, Rev. Federico Lombardi, S. J., and Rev. Dino Faggion, S. J. The Jesuits of Campion Hall in Oxford offered me ideal quarters in which to conduct a summer's research. I also resided for lengthy periods within a stone's throw of the Pantheon at the Jesuit Collegio San Roberto Bellarmino. During those Roman sojourns, I was given support by Rev. Dominic Marucca, S. J., Rev. Bernard Hall, S. J., and a host of Jesuits from around the world.

I am likewise grateful to the administration of the following libraries for answering my queries and for supplying photographic reproductions of Vergerio materials: the University Library in Cambridge; the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich; the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; Drs. Fiorella Romano and A. Garofalo of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Naples; Dr. Louis Jordan, the Curator of the Ambrosiana Collection at the University of Notre Dame; Mr. D. P. Mortlock, the Librarian at Holkham Hall in Norfolk; Ms. Fran Benham of the Pius XII Library at St. Louis University; Dr. Michelle Brown, Curator of Manuscripts at the British Library in London; Dr. B. C. Barker-Benfield, Senior Assistant Librarian at the Bodleian Library in Oxford; Dr. Gerd Brinkhus of the Universitätsbibliothek in Tübingen; Drs. Glauco Giuliano and Aldo Pirola of the Biblioteca Queriniana in Brescia; Prof. Luciano A. Floramo of the Biblioteca Guarneriana in San Daniele del Friuli; Dr. Antonio

Antonioni of the Biblioteca Universitaria in Padua; Rev. Ugo Fossa of the Biblioteca del Monastero in Camaldoli; Dr. Claudine Lemaire of the Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier in Brussels; Rev. Pierantonio Gios of the Biblioteca del Seminario in Padua; Dr. Ernesto Milano of the Biblioteca Estense in Modena; Dr. M. Luisa Turchetti of the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan; Dr. Emilio Lippi of the Biblioteca Comunale in Treviso; Dr. Nolden of the Stadtbibliothek in Trier; Rev. John Brudney, O. S. B., of the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library at St. John's University; and Dr. Ramón González of the Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares in Toledo.

Dr. Ennio Sandal, former director of the Biblioteca Comunale in Brescia, welcomed me in ways beyond the call of duty. I am also grateful to Dr. Dino Barattin, then director of the Biblioteca Comunale in San Daniele, who went so far as to have me sample the local prosciutto and put me in contact with Prof. Laura Casarsa of the University of Trieste, who shared her exhaustive description of San Daniele codex 144 with me prior to its publication. There are four libraries where I passed many months consulting manuscripts and supporting materials: the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the Museo Civico in Padua, the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana in Vatican City. To their directors and employees I would like to say a special word of thanks and offer hope that the publication of this volume in some way repays their collective confidence. That holds doubly for Rev. Leonard Boyle, O.P., who was kind enough to take time from his busy schedule and check two Vatican manuscripts for me.

Concetta Bianca and Massimo Miglio gave their valuable time to help me rule out the presence of Giannandrea Bussi's hand in two Vatican codices. Armando Petrucci and Franca Nardelli offered assistance in matters of paleography and codicology and provided constant inspiration concerning a scholar's commitment. I am very grateful to Gianfranco Fioravanti for reading the Latin texts of the Vergerio sermons with the careful eye that characterizes his editorial work in late medieval Latin. Lastly, throughout the years of preparation of this volume, I have relied in myriad ways on the friendship of Rev. Mark Henninger, S. J. And throughout, he has had a calming, sage influence on my work. None of these persons bears any responsibility, however, for the inevitable mistakes that have evaded their diligent scrutiny.

I am very grateful to all involved in the publication of the *Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies* series. In particular, I thank the general editor of the series, Professor Mario Di Cesare, the professional referees

of my manuscript who made fine suggestions, and the diligent MRTS staff, all of whom provided invaluable assistance. Finally, I am most fortunate to have three brothers who always offer me the broadest support, especially in the inevitable moments of self-doubt that accompany scholarly writing. Thus, it is to Tom, to Dave, and to Pat that I dedicate this book, and not only in the hope that it may spur them to buy me a draft when next we meet.

Abbreviations

The abbreviations for classical authors and works are taken from *A Latin Dictionary*, edited by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), vii-xi; and *A Greek-English Lexicon*, edited by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), xvi-xli.

BAV	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BMC	<i>A Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century Now in the British Museum</i> . Edited by R. Proctor and A. W. Pollard. 12 vols. London, 1908-.
Copinger	W. A. Copinger. <i>Supplement to Hain's Repertorium Bibliographicum</i> . Part 2, <i>Additions</i> . 2 vols. London, 1898-1906.
CSEL	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> . Vienna, 1886-.
CTC	<i>Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum</i> . Edited by P. O. Kristeller and F. Edward Cranz. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1960-.
DBI	<i>Dizionario biografico degli Italiani</i> . Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960-.
Epist.	<i>Epistolario di Pier Paolo Vergerio</i> . Edited by Leonardo Smith. Fonti per la storia d'Italia pubblicate dall'Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo 74. Rome, 1934.
GW	<i>Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke</i> . Leipzig, 1925-.
Hain	Ludovicus Hain. <i>Repertorium Bibliographicum</i> . Berlin, 1925.
IGI	<i>Indice generale degli incunaboli delle biblioteche d'Italia</i> . 6 vols. Rome, 1943-81.
IMU	<i>Italia medioevale ed umanistica</i>

<i>Iter</i>	Paul Oskar Kristeller. <i>Iter Italicum</i> . 6 vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963–91.
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> . Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844–64.
PPV	Pierpaolo Vergerio the elder
<i>RIS</i>	<i>Rerum Italicarum scriptores</i> . Edited by Ludovico Antonio Muratori. Milan, 1723–51; n.s., Città di Castello and Bologna, 1900–.
s.t.	<i>sine typographo</i> (Publisher unknown)

Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder

The Humanist as Orator

CHAPTER 1

Iustinopolitanus

Sometime between 1368 and 1370, Pierpaolo Vergerio the elder was born to Ser Vergerio di Giovanni de' Vergeri and Ysabetta degli Azoni, who had married in 1360. Despite extensive research, scholars have been unable to fix the precise year of Vergerio's birth.¹ Shrouded in mystery, it is like many details of Vergerio's private life. His surviving letters, which run to over four hundred pages in the modern edition, reflect his careful creation of a public personality. Vergerio permitted only rare glimpses of his private life. For example, Vergerio told us virtually nothing of his lineage or kinship. Later descendants traced the roots of the family to Verzerio III Luzzago, who led Brescian troops in storming the castle of San Martino di Gavardo in 1121. The memories of such feudal exploits show the family's tendency to justify a nobility that they only achieved in 1430. Vergerio's father worked as a notary

¹ In "The Year of Leonardo Bruni's Birth and Methods for Determining the Ages of Humanists Born in the Trecento," *Speculum* 52 (1977): 599–604, Hans Baron systematically reexamined the evidence and argued for a date of birth in 1368 or 1369. Vergerio asserted (*Epist.*, 373) that Francesco Zabarella was not quite ten years older than himself, and Leonardo Smith (*Epist.*, xiii n. 1) summarizes the documentary evidence which establishes that Zabarella was born on 10 August 1360. Secondly, Baron cited the statutes of the University of Bologna from 1405, which required that a professor be twenty years old, and Vergerio is listed on the university rolls in 1388. The contrary evidence derives from a statement of Leonardo Bruni that Vergerio was much older than he (*Commentarius, RIS*, n.s., 19.3:432). Baron determined that Bruni actually was born in March of 1370 and interpreted Bruni's statement as a reflection of psychological inferiority before Vergerio's significant achievements. According to Baron, the two humanists were at most a few years apart in age. Baron rightly discarded the date of 23 July 1370 for Vergerio's birth because it represents an interpolation by a seventeenth-century biographer, perhaps Bartolomeo Petronio (see the *Epist.*, 471). See also Giovanni Calò, "Nota vergeriana: Il *De ingenuis moribus* e il supposto precettorato del Vergerio alla corte di Francesco Novello," *Rinascita* 2 (1939): 226–28.

and managed through his professional activities and his wife's dowry to create a comfortable life for his family in Capodistria.²

Two childhood experiences, one of festive celebration and another of desperate flight, seared themselves into Pierpaolo Vergerio's memory. He connected both of them to the family's devotion to a local Christian hero, Saint Jerome. Vergerio harbored especially happy memories of a celebration on 30 September, when his family annually commemorated the feast of Saint Jerome.

After my parents had attended the sacred rites celebrated in the appropriate and customary manner, they were accustomed for as long as their resources permitted (and they had clear memories that their own ancestors had done the same thing continuously on this feast day) to offer a solemn banquet for the indigent of the city. They attended first of all to the poor and then extended their largesse to friends, relatives, and domestic servants, thereby expressing their loyalty to the latter and their compassion toward the former. Insofar as my parents had the means to pay the costs of such a celebration, they eagerly desired to make all the others share in their own joy. We happily marked the feast day in public and private rituals. Now, however, after hostile fortune turned against us, unleashing war's destructive powers, only the desire remains. The celebration itself has ceased. Nevertheless, although I regret having nothing greater to offer in my state of poverty, I have vowed that, as long as I live, I will review the praises and excellent merits of Jerome in a speech before an assembly of the best citizens.³

² Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, xi-xiii, 9-12 n. 1. Ysabetta degli Azoni was the daughter of Pietro degli Azoni, a citizen of Capodistria. Her new dowry contract was drafted before the *podestà* in 1383. Ysabetta brought her husband property valued at eight hundred *libri parvorum* as well as five hundred *libri parvorum* in coins. On the noble status achieved by Vergerio di Simone (1430) and Colmano (1431), see Smith, *Epist.*, 465 n. 3, 476-77 n. 3; Gregorio De Totto, "Il patriziato di Capodistria," *Atti e memorie della Società istriana di archeologia e storia patria* 49 (1937): 149-50; and Gedeone Pusterla, *I nobili di Capodistria e dell'Istria con cenni storico-biografici* (2d ed. Capodistria, 1888), 18-19. For the capture of S. Martino di Gavardo, see also Alfredo Bosisio, "Il Comune," in *Dalle origini alla caduta della signoria viscontea* (1426), vol. 1 of *Storia di Brescia* (Brescia, 1963), 587-88.

³ See PPV, *Sermo 5 pro Sancto Hieronymo*: "Solebant parentes mei, dum fortuna letaeque res starent, atque id a suis fieri solitum commemorabant perpetuo hoc ipso festo die, cum sacra ritu debito et solito more peracta essent, sollemne convivium pauperibus facere—his quidem primum, tum et amicis, familiaribus atque domesticis hominibus—quo et in illos pietas et in hos alacritas funderetur. Omnes enim, quoad poterant et facultates suae ferre sustinebant, gaudii sui studebant participes facere. Dies hic et foris et domi laetus agebatur.

As Vergerio indicates, those idyllic days of family celebration ended abruptly during the War of Chioggia (1378–1381). The war pitted Venice against Genoa and embroiled the smaller states of northern Italy in the conflict as the two republics battled for commercial dominance. The Vergerio family, who lived in a small town of the Venetian Empire, found themselves dragged into the hostilities. That experience constituted the second of Vergerio's vivid childhood memories. In 1380 Genoese troops raided the Istrian peninsula and set the torch to Capodistria itself. Vergerio de' Vergeri gathered up his family and fled into exile. The family eventually reached Cividale del Friuli and took refuge there for the next two years. And their patron saint did not abandon them in their hour of need.

You no doubt recall, father, the miracles that Jerome worked on our behalf, miracles which I saw with my own eyes. During that wartime clash, when all were filled with terror and matters rushed toward destruction, who snatched us alive from multiple ambushes prepared against us? Who carried us safe and sound from the devastation and smoldering ashes of our depopulated homeland? Or, after we had left our ancestral land and received a friendly welcome on foreign soil, who carried us back home and assured our reintegration there in safety? Who finally saved your life, when under a sentence of death and exposed to such great dangers? Who else but the patron to whom we had committed ourselves!⁴

Nunc vero, postquam bellicis fragoribus inimica fortuna res arbitrio suo vertit, mansit animus, cessit mos. Ego autem, qui nihil maius in tanta egestate quod tribuam habeo, de crevi singulo anno dum vixero laudes Hieronymi et praeclara merita in conventu optimorum recensere. Si quando tamen fortuna placido vultu faverit, ne vetustum quidem morem familiae nostrae praetermittam."

⁴ *Epist.*, 186–87: "Nam, ut omittam cetera, quae, ante illam tempestatem toti fere orbi cognitam, in qua et nos naufragium passi essemus nisi illius affuisset subsidium, certa de eo erga nos miracula recensebas, et ad ea veniam quae ipsemet vidi, quis nos eo belli fragore, quo cuncta terrebantur, cuncta / ruebant, ex tot paratis insidiis vivos eripuit? quis ex patriae populatae ruinis, ardentis cineribus, sanos et tutos evexit? aut quis patrium solum egressos ac in alieno benigne receptos olim in patriam et revexit ac in tuto reposuit? quis denique caput tuum damnatum, tot periculis expositum, nisi is cui fuerat commendatum, servavit incolume?" For the effects of the war on the Venetian regime, see Reinhold C. Mueller, "Effetti della Guerra di Chioggia (1378–1381) sulla vita economica e sociale di Venezia," *Ateneo veneto*, n.s., 19 (1981): 35–40; and Dennis Romano, *Patricians and "Popolani": The Social Foundations of the Venetian Renaissance State* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 19, 28, 32–34, 128–29, 154–55.

Later in life, Pierpaolo Vergerio nurtured pleasant memories of those two years in exile. Cividale del Friuli, set in a fertile valley, had citizens who showed themselves most benevolent toward his family.⁵ The war, however, had forever changed their status. Much of their patrimony was lost in the Genoese sack. Moreover, Vergerio's father had to account to the victorious Venetian authorities for fleeing to the territory of the patriarch of Aquileia, an ally of the Genoese. He almost lost his life, and he never succeeded in fully recovering his financial resources. At various junctures in the next twenty years, the family sold off properties to meet expenses. Vergerio's letters to wealthy friends often express his concern for the "most opulent misery" in which his parents had now to live.⁶ The banquet in Jerome's honor remained a conscious ideal, which Vergerio promised to revive if ever fortune's wheel might again spin in the family's favor. However, from the experiences of his childhood, Vergerio had learned that it was futile to struggle against fortune.⁷ Only the beneficence of a patron like Jerome had mitigated fortune's sting.

Vergerio's cult of Jerome, a "local" saint, was one of the remarkably long-lived customs that Mediterraneans observed to commemorate the death of beloved ones. Those customs transcended the artificial bounds of institutionalized belief in order to express the deepest impulses of a common humanity.⁸ Like their Roman ancestors, the Vergerio family held a memorial banquet to mark the day of Jerome's birth to the after-life. While Vergerio never failed to honor that birthday, he left no indi-

⁵ *Epist.*, xii-xiv, 100-101 ("Nam posteaquam puer, eversa natali patria, Forumiulii bienio cum parentibus incolui, ubi, quod semper prae me feram, et humanitate multa / et beneficiis plurimis comiter habiti, in summa calamitate fuimus, ita quidem penitus animo meo inhaesit sedes illa terrarum ut postea semper loco patriae mihi haberetur"). For the strategic and commercial importance of the patriarchate of Aquileia, see Denys Hay and John Law, *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance, 1380-1530*, Longman History of Italy (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 232-36.

⁶ *Epist.*, 9-11, 30, and esp. 141-42: "Parentes mei, ut plerique, ex angustia rei domesticae abire inde non possunt. Quamquam, O Deus, quid dixi angustiam, et non potius / summam atque opulentissimam miseriam?" Such letters constitute appeals for financial help. For the sale of properties, see the comments of Smith, *ibid.*, 11n. The fact that Vergerio's mother petitioned for a new dowry record in 1383 may have been an effort to save her possessions from the family's creditors.

⁷ *Epist.*, 6-7.

⁸ I am applying insights from the stimulating essay of Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago, 1981), which treats of the use of that cult by the elite of late Roman antiquity to enhance their political control. Affluent Christians of that era used funeral banquets as a way to assist the poor; see D. W. O'Connor, *Peter in Rome: The Literary, Liturgical and Archeological Evidence* (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), 148-49.

cation of the date of his own birth. During the funerary banquet for the saint, the Vergerio family set aside the prevailing social distinctions of their world, as ancient Christians had done at the tombs of their heroes. For one brief moment, in deference to their powerful patron and his divine lord, class boundaries were ignored. The poor and the domestic servants joined the family for their meal. As a small boy, Vergerio imbibed ideals of solidarity at a table set in charity.

Yet such solidarity did not challenge the overarching structure of dependence suggested in the rite. Jerome functioned as a heavenly patron for the city of Capodistria as well as for the Vergerio household. The family first attended the public celebration of the feast in church before continuing that celebration in their own private ritual. The Vergerio family could never claim Jerome as their personal property; the cult had assumed a civic character. It would make no sense to attempt to use Jerome as the inspiration for rebellion against Venetian authority. Thus, the piety of the family tended to reinforce assumptions about legitimate imperial rule. The powerful Jerome had acted beneficently on behalf of his pious clients. Similarly, Venice's governing patricians acted beneficently toward loyal citizens in places like Capodistria. The basic movement of efficacious government was downward, from a magnanimous elite toward a populace in need. Ideals of unanimity and concord then spread horizontally outward from that basic vertical impulse.

The history of Venetian dealings with Vergerio's hometown reflected such dynamics. In 1279, after centuries of close political collaboration, Venice had fully incorporated Capodistria into her burgeoning maritime empire. The entire Istrian peninsula supplied important necessities for the capital city. By ruling Istria, Venice assured herself a supply of agricultural products, of stone resistant to salt air, and of prostitutes to meet the steady demand of a port city. Meanwhile, the subject city of Capodistria managed to gain important privileges by exploiting the dialectic of cooperation and resistance. Collaboration in the early years of Venetian involvement led in 1182 to the designation of Capodistria as the sole unloading port for salt between Grado and Promontore. An unsuccessful rebellion in 1348 induced the Venetian government to grant Capodistria greater local autonomy.⁹ In both cases a generous patron had ultimately

⁹ On the relations between Venice and Capodistria, see Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973), 59–60; Francesco Semi, *Capodistria: Guida storica ed artistica con illustrazioni* (Capodistria, [1930]), 5–6, 8–10; Laura Gorrato, "La Repubblica di Venezia e le sue relazioni commerciali con la

acted with mercy toward her client: that ancient social relationship still structured much of Vergerio's political society.

Vergerio's parents had embraced Jerome as their saintly protector, to whom they might turn in a daily quest for safety and especially in times of crisis. The devotion of his parents led Vergerio to a relationship of special intimacy with Jerome, for Jerome became not only a patron and friend but increasingly an exemplar, who spurred him to progress in learning. The embrace did not spare Vergerio from experiencing vulnerability in a world marked by violent injustice. Notwithstanding a flourishing cult of local saints, Capodistria was destroyed by Genoese troops. To humiliate the city and its Venetian overlord, the enemy forces deliberately destroyed the most telling symbols of civic life. They burned the Municipal Palace where the Venetian *podestà* resided, and they stole the relics of Saints Alexander and Nazarius before torching the cathedral.¹⁰ A latter-day Aeneas, Vergerio's father snatched his family from the burning ruins of the *patria* and led them into temporary exile.

During those traumas, however, Jerome did not abandon his devotees. He enveloped them in a mantle of protection during the flight, paved the way for their friendly reception in Cividale del Friuli, and then led them safely back to Capodistria in 1382. Once again, Pierpaolo Vergerio felt the sinister force of violence in his world. The restored Venetian authorities had condemned his father in absentia for treason because he had obtained refuge in a city allied with the Genoese. And once again, the family's patron saint intervened to assure that Vergerio's father would benefit from a wider amnesty. The condemnation was lifted after Vergerio's father had sworn loyalty to the Venetian regime.¹¹ Vergerio envisioned in his mind's eye the sufferings of exodus and alienation that Jerome miraculously turned into occasions of protection and reintegration. Jerome had graciously fulfilled his role as patron by appealing to the divinity to use divine power on behalf of devoted clients.

penisola istriana dal XI al XIII secolo," *Pagine istriane* 3-4 (1986): 19-21, 24, 27; and Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex, Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*, Studies in the History of Sexuality 1 (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 41-42.

¹⁰ The relics were restored to Capodistria in 1422. Hymns written for that occasion were erroneously attributed to Vergerio; see Smith, *Epist.*, 506.

¹¹ Smith, *Epist.*, 187 n. 1, cites a document dated 8 January 1382, in which Marino Memmo, the Venetian *podestà*, informed Doge Andrea Contarini (1368-82) that a group of exiles had asked for pardon upon returning to Capodistria and had promised perpetual loyalty to Venice. The group included Vergerio de' Vergerii.

Jerome, therefore, functioned as a political force, righting injustice through acts of mercy. Vergerio saw those actions as evidence for the abundant mercy of God; as Peter Brown well stated, such acts were a "silver lining of amnesty" in the dark cloud of disorder and violence.¹² Through the local legend that Jerome had grown up in Sdregna, a small town in the diocese of Capodistria, the young Vergerio possessed a physical link to the area's perennial hero.¹³ Through a vow to deliver a panegyric on the feast of Jerome, no matter where he found himself, the mature Vergerio sought to create a more reliable tie to his patron. The general etiquette of a patronage relationship acquired even deeper significance through a binding commitment freely made. Preaching offered a flexible means to maintain intimate companionship across physical distance. In effect, Vergerio forced Jerome to travel with him. Moreover, as Vergerio gradually discovered, preaching also offered him a means to diffuse the power of Jerome's presence to a wider world. He could urge others to imitate the most virtuous qualities of that patron. Vergerio entered the extended family of Jerome, armed with ideals of concord and solidarity for a world riven by social dependencies. By depending on a heavenly patron, Vergerio ultimately gained a healthy measure of independence for himself. During the moments of anxiety generated by his own uprootedness and insecurity, Vergerio found Jerome a consoling presence.

The rough antitheses proposed in Vergerio's earliest panegyrics for Jerome reflect Vergerio's own emerging values as he matured from childhood to adolescence. Vergerio admired Jerome's consistent choice of the upright course of action, which often defied the common wisdom of his world. By rating himself a poor learner, Jerome had made himself well equipped to teach others. By choosing a hermitage in Bethlehem,

¹² Brown, *Cult of Saints*, 91.

¹³ On phonetic grounds, a medieval tradition identified Jerome's birthplace of Stridon with Sdregna (or Sdrigna in Italian). The tradition is recorded in Ioannes Andreae, *Hieronymianus*, cod. Ottob. lat. 480, 16; and Flavio Biondo, *Italia illustrata*, 387–88. The tiny town (*oppidulum*) is located to the southeast of Capodistria, in the center of the Istrian peninsula between Pinguente and Portole. In 1828, Slavic Žrenj (or Zrinj) became part of the diocese of Trieste, when that diocese absorbed the bishopric of Capodistria. Koper (Capodistria) reacquired the status of a separate diocese in 1977. The exact location of Stridon is still a mystery. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 3–5; and Giuseppe Cusito, *Cristianesimo antico ad Aquileia e in Istria*, Fonti e studi per la storia della Venezia Giulia: Studi, n.s., 3 (Trieste: Deputazione di storia patria per la Venezia Giulia, 1977), 233–38. For Vergerio's sermons on Jerome, see chapter 8 below.

Jerome had renounced certain election to the office of pope. Jerome had fled the city of Rome to be of benefit to the entire world.¹⁴ The last antithesis had a special appeal for Vergerio, providing him with a model of the mobility necessary for scholarly activity. Jerome left his tiny hometown of Stridon for Rome in order to study Latin grammar and become a better person. He left Rome when attacks by his jealous rivals destroyed his inner peace. From Rome he sailed for Greece, where he polished his considerable philological skills under the guidance of Gregory of Nazianzus. He finally embraced the life of a monk in Bethlehem. Throughout his journey, Jerome had demonstrated detachment from material goods and patriotic sentiments; such detachment allowed his commitment to intellectual and moral priorities to flourish.¹⁵ Vergerio admired Jerome's willingness to travel, and he justified his own journeys by comparing himself to his hero.

Vergerio had discovered that he could not fulfill his great ambitions in a small town like Capodistria. "From boyhood the conviction took root in my soul that, were I able to live safely and protect my integrity, I would renounce my homeland." In letters written throughout his life and in a short, unfinished treatise, Vergerio expressed his ambivalent feelings toward his place of birth.¹⁶ Capodistria's setting in the gulf of

¹⁴ See, e.g., PPV, *Sermo 1*: "Factus est enim iustissimus, dum se semper existimat peccatorem, evenitque de ipso quod de alio ipsemet scribit, quod, dum se pauperem semper ad discendum credit, ad docendum locupletissimum se fecit. Ecce enim dum Romae ex suis meritis atque virtutibus dignus ab omnibus summo sacerdotio creditur, ipse se dignum credidit qui in eremum iret ad sua peccata deflenda; dumque doctissimus ab omnibus et haberetur et diceretur, tunc demum Gregorio Nazianzeno se tradidit in disciplinam. Ex quibus factum est ut non tam summo pontificatu, ad quem etiam indigni pervenire possunt, quam regno caelorum, quo nullus pertingit indignus, se dignissimum redderet, et qui, si aliis forsitan de se credidisset, auctor plurimis fuisset erroris, humiliter de se sentiens, doctor factus est veritatis. . . ." See also PPV, *Sermo 5* (dated 1392): "Hic cum esset in amplissimo gradu dignitatis, cum Romae optimus et doctissimus celebraretur, abiit potius et monasterii parietibus se inclusit; fugiens (quod tunc pulcherrimum et praecipuum in orbe erat) Romam, secessit in desertam solitudinem. . . ."

¹⁵ See especially PPV, *Sermo 6*, which is structured upon an antithesis between Jerome's place of birth and his service to the entire Christian world ("Nihil igitur apud eum aut amor patriae aut attinentium caritas domusve aut vitae prioris consuetudo valuit quin pro eremo patriam, pro monasterio domum, pro monachis attinentes et notos vitamque civilem pristinam pro austerissima eremo commutaret"). In the panegyrics, Vergerio followed the chronology of Jerome's life as traditionally elaborated in medieval biographies; see Eugene Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1985), 25–28.

¹⁶ *Epist.*, 147: "Atque ita mihi a puero ea sententia animo stetit ut, si honeste tutoque possim, patriam negem." See further *Epist.*, 7, 27, 30, 36–37, 123–24, 126, 138–40, and 142–51; and *De situ urbis Iustinopolitanae*, *RIS* 16:240A–41D. Vergerio's attitude toward Capodistria is discussed by Maria Pia Billanovich, "Bernardino Parenzano e le origini di Capo-

Trieste and its Roman past left him with a mild sense of pride. Especially when approached by sea, the city stood forth in the natural beauty of its setting on a rocky projection in an inlet surrounded by cliffs of white stone. Vergerio noted that the optical illusion, whereby those cliffs seemed shaped like a goat, may explain the Greek name for the city, *Aegida*. Though the common people foolishly explained Capodistria as deriving from *caput Istriae*, given its proximity to the border of Istria at the Risano River, Vergerio intuited that the correct etymology derived from a Latin rendering of the expression "Istrian goat" (*capris Istriae*). In addition to the Latin etymology, Vergerio also pointed to historical evidence that linked his region closely to Rome. The emperor Augustus had extended the boundaries of the province of Italy to include the Istrian peninsula, and Vergerio had seen archaeological remains from Roman antiquity during his visits to nearby Trieste.

Vergerio was particularly intrigued to discover when and why people had begun to call the city *Iustinopolis*. Some claimed that the name should be traced to the emperor Justin II (565–578), though Vergerio could find no documentary or epigraphical evidence to verify that hypothesis. Others saw it as an association with the historian Iustinus, who had narrated the legendary settlement of the Colchians in Istria after their unsuccessful attempt to recover the golden fleece. Vergerio favored this explanation, though he also offered the possibility that the name derived from some unknown Iustinus. Vergerio's investigations to establish the correct etymology of Capodistria and Iustinopolis reveal the characteristics of his historical methods. He sought evidence to defend his conclusions in documents and in archaeological remains such as inscriptions. In the absence of conclusive evidence, he offered multiple hypotheses. The more popular an explanation was among the common people, the less Vergerio tended to trust it.

Closer scrutiny of the city and personal experience of its political life gave Vergerio sufficient cause to dislike his hometown. He felt that geographical liabilities affected the moral quality of life in Capodistria. Like classical theorists, Vergerio suggested a close tie between environment and moral behavior.¹⁷ To reach the city by land, one had to cross a

distria," *IMU* 14 (1971): 269–70, and David Robey, "Aspetti dell'umanesimo vergeriano," in Vittore Branca and Sante Graciotti, eds., *L'umanesimo in Istria*, *Civiltà veneziana*: Studi 38 (Florence: Olschki, 1983), 8.

¹⁷ Ciceronian descriptions of cities like Athens and Thebes suggested that living conditions to a significant extent shaped human temperament; see Cicero *Fat.* 4.7. The corpus of

narrow path through a fetid swamp formed by silt deposits from the Risano River. That situation offered a possible explanation why the Slavs had chosen the name *Koper* for the city. Koper constituted a Slavic cognate derived from the Greek words for dung (*kopros*) or dunghill (*kopria*). Capodistria's infected air caused fever among the inhabitants. Those physical maladies in turn produced negative moral effects. The city was riddled by dissension as factions favorable and opposed to Venetian hegemony played a bloody game of dominance.¹⁸

Vergerio, therefore, looked upon the Istrian area as "undistinguished" (*ignobilis*) and Capodistria as "luckless" (*infausta*). Having experienced misfortune as a child in Capodistria, Vergerio eventually saw that quality as endemic to the town where he had grown up. Capodistria lacked precisely those qualities that would make an urban setting ideal for the practice of public service: his city had no knowledge (*scientia*) and love for virtue, and consequently gave no reward to those who pursued that worthy combination of learning and moral living. Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, a cherished mentor, once objected to Vergerio's negative characterization of Capodistria. By way of rebuttal, Conversini cited Jerome as an example of an excellent man who had grown up in the region. Vergerio granted that Jerome's prestige increased the historical significance of his region. In the end, however, Jerome too had left the region to pursue virtue and acquire fame. Great deeds needed a sufficient public or they would never have their inspirational impact. Even Conversini admitted that the Istrian peninsula was so isolated that scholars who resided there found themselves with little to do. That led many to drink heavily in order to compensate for their boredom.

Vergerio moved frequently early in life, following the example set by his patron Jerome. The most plausible reconstruction of his activities in

Hippocrates included a short work entitled *On Airs, Waters, Places* which explored the effects of climate and locale on health and on ethnic and cultural differences; see Edwin Burton Levine, *Hippocrates*, World Author Series 165 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), 128–50. In general, see the trenchant observations of Ann C. Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: Univ. of California Press, 1993), 131–55.

¹⁸ *Epist.*, 146–47: "Cum enim a maioribus meis audiissem, qua illa dignitate urbs totaque erat quondam provincia, qua fortuna res publica quaque virtute homines, tum postea et vidissem puer et sensissem praesens, qua esset miseria, quo exterminio, qua calamitate, indigna res mihi visa est planeque miseranda. Cum autem praevisse et dura odia et seditiones graves et tectas inter se civium similitudines accepissem, notareque in dies / magis mores atque animos hominum, non frustra evenisse omnia vitio suo iudicavi."

the decade beginning in 1380 involves extensive travels. By the decade's end, Vergerio was surely a skilled horseman.¹⁹ In 1380, he left Capodistria for political exile in Cividale del Friuli. The family returned to Capodistria in 1382, when his father felt confident of obtaining a pardon from Venice. There are indications that in 1384 Vergerio visited Aquileia, returning to Capodistria shortly thereafter. An early biographer posited that Vergerio resided in Padua in 1385 in order to study Latin grammar, and it seems virtually certain that Vergerio taught dialectic in Florence from 1386 to 1387.²⁰ In the first months of 1388, Vergerio transferred his teaching activities to the University of Bologna; during the summer recess, however, he returned home to Capodistria. He stopped in Padua before returning to Bologna in the fall of 1388 to resume his teaching duties. In the spring of 1390, he fled an outbreak of the plague in Bologna and sought refuge in Capodistria. By May, he had returned to the University of Bologna, which he definitively abandoned late in 1390 in order to matriculate at Padua. Vergerio almost always traveled because his educational activities, which shaped his priorities throughout his adolescence, required that he do so.

Such mobility took an emotional toll on the young traveler. Vergerio's letters reflected an only child's anxiety for the well-being of his parents. Every time he left Capodistria, his parents had to fend for themselves.²¹ Furthermore, Vergerio maintained his freedom to move about by choosing not to marry. His father had urged his son to consider marriage as a potential economic investment; an ample dowry could help to restore the family's affluence. Vergerio admitted the wisdom of his father's advice, but money wasn't that important to him. Bachelorhood helped to assure Vergerio's liberty; as a bachelor, he could pursue his studies without distraction. Moreover, he was timid with women, and he thought them domineering. With respectful regret, Vergerio decided to reject his father's recommendation. He could hardly claim to be concerned for the poverty of his parents if he simply dismissed his

¹⁹ The following chronology is based upon the reconstruction of Smith, *Epist.*, xii-xiv, 3-46. Cf. *ibid.*, 210-11, for Vergerio's experiences in Rome in 1398, when his riding skills helped him avoid serious trouble.

²⁰ Ronald Witt graciously shared with me the typescript of an article entitled "Still the Matter of the Two Giovannis," which will be published in *Rinascimento*. In that study, Witt posits that, during this Florentine sojourn, Vergerio may well have studied rhetoric under the tutelage of Giovanni Malpaghini da Ravenna.

²¹ See, e.g., *Epist.*, 30: "Magis me gravat et maxime torquet parentum inopia, qui non aequè patienter ut vellem incommoda sua ferunt."

father's proposal. Thus, he conceded that he would take a wife, but only if his father ordered him to do so, which never happened. The entire experience gave the son a renewed appreciation for the respect shown to him by a tolerant father. Rather than compel Vergerio to act against his wishes, his father had left the decision in his hands.²²

Not surprisingly, Vergerio battled loneliness in those years on the move. At times, he attempted to overcome his isolation by embracing a Stoic asceticism. More frequently, he sought to create a circle of friends through his correspondence. His insistent requests for letters more than once irritated his acquaintances. Still, he pressed them for some form of response. Some of those friendships seem more the product of Vergerio's willpower than of mutual esteem. Other friendships proved to be genuine and supportive. While Vergerio was teaching dialectic in Florence, he came to know Coluccio Salutati and Francesco Zabarella. Those two older scholars remained a fundamental influence upon Vergerio's life until their deaths in 1406 and 1417 respectively. In important ways Salutati and Zabarella exemplified for Vergerio alternative responses to the question of the intellectual's role in society. Salutati had capitalized on his rhetorical skills to gain employment in the government of various communes and ultimately won appointment as chancellor of the Florentine Republic; he thereby established himself as undisputed leader of the humanist avant-garde. Zabarella, on the other hand, found his opportunity within the intellectual establishment; as a cleric he taught canon law at the University of Florence and later at Padua. Both mentors will play an important role in the story to unfold.²³ Vergerio in-

²² *Epist.*, 131-37. Cf. *ibid.*, 155-56, 182-83, where Vergerio comments further on women; and *ibid.*, 481-82, where evidence suggests that Vergerio commended Charondas, the Catanian lawgiver (sixth century BC), for outlawing a second marriage. Vergerio felt that, if a first marriage made one unhappy, it was insane to try again.

²³ For Salutati's career, see Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati*, *Medioevo e umanesimo* 4 (Padua: Antenore, 1963); and Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, *Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1983). Gasparo Zonta's biography of Zabarella, *Francesco Zabarella (1360-1417)* (Padua, 1915), should be supplemented by Thomas E. Morrissey, "Emperor-Elect Sigismund, Cardinal Zabarella, and the Council of Constance," *The Catholic Historical Review* 69 (1983): 353-70; Morrissey, "Franciscus Zabarella (1360-1417): Papacy, Community, and Limitations Upon Authority," in Guy Fitch Lytle, ed., *Reform and Authority in the Medieval and Reformation Church* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1981), 37-54; Agostino Sottili, "La questione ciceroniana in una lettera di Francesco Zabarella a Francesco Petrarca (tav. IV)," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 6 (1973): 30-38; Annalisa Belloni, *Professori giuristi a Padova nel secolo XV: Profili bio-bibliografici e cattedre*, *Ius Commune: Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte* 28 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1986), 204-8; and the forthcom-

creasingly focused his studies in an effort to bridge the gap between the academic and political worlds.

The disruptive experiences of his childhood continued to affect Vergerio's sensitivities as he matured. In what may be his earliest letter, written around the age of fifteen, Vergerio indicated that he had originally desired to become a merchant (*negotiator*) in order to assure financial security. By seeking the guidance of a successful merchant, Vergerio hoped to acquire the skills of a shrewd businessman and go from poverty to quick wealth.²⁴ Vergerio soon lost interest in the life of a merchant; however, his experience taught him to attend to the internal dispositions typical of various stages in human development. When Vergerio wrote that letter, he had already begun to reflect on the psychology of learning. Vergerio noticed that new apprentices burned with a curiosity to learn as much as possible about their prospective trade. Their zeal, however, was tempered by the repetitive discipline required to master a trade. Educators needed to exploit the enthusiasm of youth for the novelty of learning and ease them through the boredom that inevitably followed.²⁵ Deciding not to become a merchant, Vergerio found his first job as a tutor of dialectic in Florence from 1386 to 1387.²⁶

ing monograph by Girgensohn (mentioned by Belloni). For examples of Vergerio's insistent requests for friendship, see his letters to Santo de' Pellegrini, Antonio Baruffaldi, and Ugo da Ferrara in *Epist.*, 15–18, 20–23. Information on Santo de' Pellegrini is found in Attilio Hortis, "Di Santo de' Pellegrini e di Blenghio de' Grilli lettera a Carlo de' Combi," *Archaeografo triestino*, ser. 2, 8 (1881–82): 407–8. Pellegrini, through his wife, was distantly related to the Vergerio family and was a partisan of the cause of the patriarch of Aquileia.

²⁴ *Epist.*, 3–5: "Nuper enim nescio quo artifice negotiator effectus, quaecumque / ad huiusmodi negotium necessaria sunt, quoad potero, undique adminicula conquirere statui, quibus et dives et in futuris agibi-/libus quae ad me attinet cautus fiam." See also Baron, "Year of Bruni's Birth," 604 n. 52.

²⁵ *Epist.*, 3: "Indulgentiori cura solent artifices novi, cum primum arti se cuipiam dede-rint, quae ad artis suae pertineant rudimenta perquirere quam dum in ea desudaverint et assuetudine fuerint confricati. Tunc etiam disciplinam nacti aut fastidio territi a sua curiositate desistunt, quam prius errandi metu et ardore novo discendi indefesse tractaverant. Consimilique modo et eadem causa infantes ac pueri omnia visendi, omnia audiendi cupidi magis sunt quam ad virilem aetatem usque provecti. Illis enim tamquam noviter in lucem editis omnia nova sunt, quae alii propter consuetudinem audire et videre parcius appetunt."

²⁶ *Epist.*, 243, where Vergerio notes that he taught dialectic in Florence as an adolescent ("dialecticam ibi iuvenis docui"), and *ibid.*, 364, where, in a posthumous commemoration for Francesco Zabarella written in 1417, he states that the two first met nearly thirty years ago in Florence ("Florentiae illum primum novi ante triginta fere annos"). Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, xiv, and David Robey, "P. P. Vergerio the Elder: Republicanism and Civic Values in the Work of an Early Italian Humanist," *Past and Present*, no. 58 (February 1973): 33, date this Florentine sojourn to 1386–87. Calò, "Nota vergeriana," 228–29, felt that Vergerio most likely taught as a private master, though he may have served as a tutor (*ripetitore*) for a university professor.

We have almost no information about Vergerio's studies prior to his beginning to offer lessons in dialectic. Previous biographers have speculated that he learned grammar and dialectic at schools in his hometown of Capodistria (1382–1385) and at Padua (1385). Because Vergerio's father had boarded his legal ward, Rantulfo del Tacco, at the school of a local Paduan master, it may be that he attempted to arrange the same opportunity for his son.²⁷ If so, Pierpaolo Vergerio would have completed his earliest studies as a boarding student in the home of his master. The traditional curriculum in the Veneto included studying the alphabet by using a primer, studying Latin grammar by using the manual attributed to Donatus, and studying Latin stylistics by scrutinizing the works of such poets as Virgil, Lucan, and Terence. The use of poetry in advanced grammatical studies had the further advantage of exercising a student's memory. Vergerio poured the money that he had earned by tutoring students in dialectic back into his own further education.

Whatever his preparation, Vergerio quickly acquired a love for the Latin language. Vergerio's curiosity led him to trace his family name from the Italian words for a type of cabbage (*verze*) and for an orchard (*verziere*) to the equivalent Latin term for orchard, *viridarium*. In his first writings, Vergerio occasionally signed himself as *Vergerius Faciatus*, punning on the image of a well-tended garden. Significantly, he soon abandoned that playful epithet and shifted to a title of greater classical significance, *Petruspaulus Iustinopolitanus*. The change reflects a growing sense of historical consciousness vital to the humanist enterprise. *Faciatus* comprised a medieval Latin term unknown to the ancients; *Iustinopolitanus* linked Vergerio to the Roman heritage of his hometown of Capodistria. The change may well be the fruit of Vergerio's participation in the discussions of the circle of humanists, who met under Coluccio Salutati's guidance at the convent of Santo Spirito during Vergerio's first stay in Florence.²⁸ Vergerio gave further proof for his admiration

²⁷ Smith, *Epist.*, xiv, who cites evidence in the biography of Vergerio attributed to Bartolomeo Petronio (*ibid.*, 471: "Anno vero eiusdem 1385 post bellum Genuense Iustinopoli Paduam migravit, ubi primo grammaticam et dialecticam quemadmodum a iunioribus solet didicit"). See *ibid.*, 100–101 n. 1, 473n, for Vergerio de' Vergeri's trip to Padua in 1381 to visit Rantulfo del Tacco. The basic course of grammatical studies is described in Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989), 17, 29–33, 111–17.

²⁸ *Epist.*, 62–63, esp. 63 (Vergerio to Salutati): "Disputationem de virtute, qualem crebro in conventu praesentium habere soles, litteris adhibe."

for Salutati in his lengthiest autograph sample. In 1388, he copied from the Latin translation of Calcidius those sections of Plato's *Timaeus* which dealt with the physical powers of the body. The ductus is of high quality, especially the brief colophon at the conclusion. And the script closely mirrors elements of the new proposal for writing that Salutati had launched in those same years. Vergerio wished to emulate the prestigious chancellor in his avant-garde learning.²⁹ Therefore, he wrote according to Salutati's revision of Semigothic script and then signed himself *Petruspaulus Iustinopolitanus*.

Eugenio Garin has characterized the last half of the fourteenth century as the "heroic period of preparation" for the full birth of the humanist movement. Vergerio was born into an epoch of violent contrasts and significant struggles. According to his way of thinking, the War of Chioggia had involved all the world's major powers. Periodic outbreaks of plague and roaming bands of Christian zealots like the Bianchi further disturbed his society. In response to the dislocations caused by the War of Chioggia, the Venetian state had increasingly intruded into private affairs by extending its network of patronage. Vergerio's earliest impressions of political power were shaped by the dynamic of such patronage. In his volatile world, Jerome had become a reliable fixed point. Subsequently, Vergerio began to find dependable

²⁹ The text is preserved in Venice, Bibl. Nazionale Marciana, cod. Marc. lat. XIV.54 (4328), fol. 101r-v (reproduction in Smith, *Epist.*, Tav. II facing 24). The Vergerio material is a separate fascicle inserted into an autograph codex of Pietro da Montagnana. For Salutati's proposed reform, see Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1960), 13-19; Ullman, *Humanism*, 129-209; Armando Petrucci, *Il protocollo notarile di Coluccio Salutati (1372-73)* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1963), 21-45; and Albinia de la Mare, *The Handwriting of Italian Humanists* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), 1:30-43. Several characteristics are typical of Salutati's reform: the sharp clarity, descenders below the line on miniscule *f* and *s*, oscillation between miniscule *d* with or without a loop on the ascender (angled to the left), varieties of final miniscule *s*, rustic maiuscule *A*, and a maiuscule *N* whose final stroke resembles a *J*. Vergerio retained the Gothic characteristic of fusing opposite curves, and he added loops on the ascenders of miniscule *h* and *l*. He generally composed miniscule *x* in a single stroke. He used the Tironian notes for *et* and *con-* and a paragraph sign that evolved from his majuscule *S*. There is also a marginal correction in Vergerio's hand in a manuscript of the *Gesta magnifica domus Carrariensis*, on which Vergerio drew heavily for his biographies of the Carrara; see the reproduction in Roberto Cessi's edition, *RIS*, n.s., 17.1.2 (Tav. I). I only recently learned of another group of manuscripts that apparently contain autograph glosses by Vergerio. In Chapter 10 below, I discuss their importance as revealed in the study of Klára Csapodi-Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz, Studia Humanitatis*. Veröffentlichungen der Arbeitsgruppe für Renaissanceforschung 6 (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1984), 18-28. On the mistaken attribution of other codices to Vergerio, see the comments of Alessandro Perosa, "Per una nuova edizione del *Paulus* del Vergerio," in Vittore Branca and Sante Gracioti, eds., *L'umanesimo in Istria*, *Civiltà veneziana*: Studi 38 (Florence: Olschki, 1983), 316-17.

sources of support in intellectual mentors like Coluccio Salutati and Francesco Zabarella. And he found the structures of Latin grammar (*literae*) a force for cohesion, which offered possibilities for verbal expression and moral persuasion. The seeds for his vocation as humanist had been planted; however, before Vergerio could nurture them to fruition, he first had to complete his university degree.³⁰

³⁰ Eugenio Garin, "La cultura fiorentina nella seconda metà del '300 e i 'barbari Britannici,'" *La rassegna della letteratura italiana* 64 (1960): 181–82; and Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350–1450*, Oxford-Warburg Studies 6 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 7, 49.

CHAPTER 2

Adolescence

In 1388, when he was about twenty years old, Pierpaolo Vergerio began to lecture in logic at the University of Bologna while he continued his own degree studies. Vergerio lived a life similar to that of a graduate assistant in a modern American university and seemed to find it just as unrewarding. He earned a minimal salary to offer a propaedeutic course and juggled his teaching obligations with his efforts to complete an advanced program.¹ Previous scholars have had difficulty in reconstructing the precise order and duration of Vergerio's studies. In general, he is fairly characterized as a professional student: one degree usually led to the pursuit of another. The best evidence indicates that Vergerio was engaged in studies at Bologna from 1388 to 1390, that he also went for a time to Padua in 1388 "for the sake of his studies," that his friend Santo de' Pellegrini addressed him with jocular respect as "a doctor of arts lecturing on logic" during his years in Bologna, and that the archdeacon of Bologna, Antonio Caetani, granted him a special indult to take examinations there even though he could not pay the required fees. Vergerio ended his sojourn at Bologna in the second half

¹ See Umberto Dallari, *I rotuli dei lettori legisti e artisti dello Studio bolognese dal 1384 al 1799* (Bologna, 1888-91; repr. Bologna, 1919-24), 1:7 (cited by Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, 22-23 n. 1), where Vergerio is listed among the lecturers in the Arts Faculty of the University of Bologna in the year 1388-89: "Ad lecturam loycae, Magister Petruspaulus electus pro Universitate." Like most lecturers, Vergerio earned a salary of fifty *lire bolognesi*. The university also had "grammarians" attached to the teaching faculty; they received the same pay to teach an introductory course in Latin to students about to pursue a university degree. See, in general, Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989), 26-29.

of 1390 because he had transferred to the University of Padua as a "doctor of arts" by May of 1391.²

Vergerio has left us a clearer record of his state of mind during those years at the University of Bologna. In the winter of 1389, he confided the level of his frustrations to his fellow Capodistrian, Santo de' Pellegrini.

With Seneca and Cicero for your companions, you lead your tranquil life, you manifest firm self-possession, and without any fear of fortune, you walk securely under the guidance of those tutors from the classical era. I, however, am far removed from your studies and far separated from your peacefulness. I pass night and day in garrulous debate, I build snares and fold curves by means of which I am able to trap a cunning sophist. Moreover, I investigate the wonderful effects of nature. Through it all I find myself jealous of your lifestyle and desirous of your mature leisure. Perhaps that derives from the human suspicion that "the grass is always greener on the other side." It may also be the case that your lifestyle is objectively better than mine. You examine what is morally upright while I examine what is true and what through contemplation of itself perfects the divine force placed within us.³

² *Epist.*, 125: "Ipse [Caetani] vero recognovit me protinus, non quidem nominatim, ut qui nulla ei familiaritate iunctus essem, sed quem aliquando ad se venientem audisset, crebroque Bononiae, dum in studiis ageremus, vidisset. Beneficii, quod in me tunc contulit, memoriam ei feci, nam universam examinis conventusque mei impensam, quae ad se spectabat, mihi remisit." The university annually allowed a small group of students to petition for a degree gratis or at university expense. By the time of this letter (1395), Caetani had become patriarch of Aquileia; for his career, see Dieter Girgensohn, "Caetani, Antonio," *DBI* 16:115-19. Vergerio later passed public examinations at Padua on 5-7 March 1405. See also *Epist.*, 4, for Vergerio's presence in Padua "studiorum gratia"; *ibid.*, 26, for Santo's greeting "artium doctori nunc actu logicam legenti Bononiae"; and *ibid.*, xv, 107, 484n. In general, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Philosophy and Medicine in Medieval and Renaissance Italy," in Stuart F. Spicker, ed., *Organism, Medicine and Metaphysics: Essays in Honor of Hans Jonas*, Philosophy and Medicine 7 (Dordrecht, Holland, and Boston: D. Reidel, 1978), 33-36; and Pearl Kibre, "Arts and Medicine in the Universities of the Later Middle Ages," in Jozef Ijsewijn and Jacques Paquet, eds., *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia 1.6 (Leuven: Leuven Univ. Press, 1978), 216-27.

³ *Epist.*, 13: "His comitantibus, vitam tuam tranquillius agis, te tibi possides et absque ullo fortunae terrore, his tutoribus, secure incedis. Ego vero longe a studiis tuis absens, longe otio tuo dispar, noctem diemque garrula disceptatione consumo, texo laqueos, complico sinus, quibus argutum possim interceptare sophistam. Miros insuper naturae effectus studiosus inquiri, tuae (nescio an quia nemini sors sua placeat an quia praeclarior tua sit) vitae semper invidus et maturi otii tui cupidus. Tu ergo quid honestum, ego quid verum rebus insit perscrutor, quid divinam vim nobis insitam sui contemplatione perficiat, ex hoc forte

As the letter to Santo indicated, Vergerio combined his teaching with continued study, focusing upon natural philosophy within the traditional arts curriculum. Because physical health for him was a gift of nature, he could accept occasional illness as unavoidable. However, Vergerio became somewhat obsessed with the personal commitment required to achieve a moral character.⁴ He confessed to discouragement, unhappiness, and agitation—typical symptoms of depression. Various causes contributed to his spiritual malaise. He surely found his teaching assignment less than satisfying. When offering lessons in dialectic, Vergerio found himself immersed in a world of rancorous verbal contention. He dedicated much of his intellectual energy to exposing the pretensions of modern-day sophists and hardly won friends thereby. He remained dissatisfied in pursuing a truth so devoid of moral content: one need only trap the opponent into revealing his logical error.⁵

Such involvement in unsatisfactory teaching activities, however, also robbed Vergerio of the possibility of focusing his energies. He had to divide his time between giving lessons and advancing his own studies and found it difficult to concentrate on the latter. Modern psychologists have explored the fatigue which work habits, filled with constant interruptions, cause a human being. It is analogous to the rapid weariness that humans experience in an art museum. As one concentrates closely on one painting and then on another, the mere act of concentration becomes more difficult and more taxing. Vergerio experienced similar fatigue and frustration. He did not teach what interested him, and he found himself too tired after teaching to make steady progress in his own studies. Thus, he felt increasingly disillusioned as he was unable to fulfill his various commitments.⁶

studio plurimum perfectionis et gloriae adepturus." Gilles Gerard Meersseman, "Seneca maestro di spiritualità nei suoi opuscoli apocrifi dal XII al XV secolo," *IMU* 16 (1973): 45, noted Seneca's disdain for dialectical hair-splitting and metaphysical speculation.

⁴ *Epist.*, 41: "Sanum enim esse et robustum et velocem et cetera huiusmodi naturae sunt munera; virtuosum autem et bene moratum nostri muneris est."

⁵ *Epist.*, 12–13 (see n. 3 above) and 30: "Miraris et tu, meae conditionis non inscius, quomodo garulis sophismatibus circumsessus tantum oratoris gradum scandere et, quod plus dicis, retinere valuerim." In general, see Neal W. Gilbert, "The Early Italian Humanists and Disputation," in Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, eds., *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron* (Florence: Sansoni, and De Kalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1971), 203–7.

⁶ *Epist.*, 19–20 ("tot enim diversa, praeter studii mei curas, inopinate subserpunt, ut nec studiis nec tibi nec mihi / impendam quod debeo, sed variis quibusdam cogitatibus et me graviter torquentibus continue sum intentus") and *ibid.*, 29–30.

The external circumstances of Vergerio's life often deepened his sense of frustration. In keeping with Stoic ideals, Vergerio tried to conceive of his poverty as the nurturing companion of a true sage, but he could not hide the fact that he found poverty nettlesome (*molesta*).⁷ Worse yet, he found himself condemned to live in an age whose culture did not reach the metaphorically banal quality of lead; he disparaged it as an age of dirt or clay or sand. Fortune had tragically unleashed two of her most powerful furies: war and plague. The city of Bologna was threatened in those years by the advance of Giangaleazzo Visconti, who had already led his Milanese forces to victory over the Della Scala despot (*signore*) of Verona and the Carrara despot of Padua. So bloody and ubiquitous did the succession of campaigns prove that Vergerio calculated an exponential increase in the horrors that they engendered. However, one could adopt defensive measures in military combat. Plague seemed even more insidious to the young professor because neither physical strength nor mental acumen offered any safe refuge. Only work distracted Vergerio from his fear of contracting the plague; he described himself as so busy that he did not even have time to die.⁸

If the years at the University of Bologna gave Vergerio cause for much agitation, they also allowed him to explore remedies for his unhappiness. He gravitated at times toward the Stoic doctrine of impassivity, inspired by his reading of the Roman philosopher, Seneca. Vergerio sensed that the tranquility of Santo de' Pellegrini's life was authentic because it derived from a leisurely communing with the written legacy of Roman Stoicism. To carry on imaginary dialogue with an author such

⁷ *Epist.*, 30 ("Paupertate igitur, ut tu me hortaris, minime moveor; eam enim iam mihi quodammodo in nutricem assumpsi, et quamvis aliquando molestam habuerim, nunc eam ut placidam hospitem teneo") and *ibid.*, 125.

⁸ *Epist.*, 34–36, esp. 35: "Quidnam arbitrandum sit tantarum cladum, tot cottidie malorum nostro saeculo ingruentium causam fore, quot et quanta vix umquam alio saeculo accidisse credi possit. Instant gravissimae guerrae, et undique circumstant proximo metus earum, fere sua radice peiores. Quae, etsi pestilentissimae sint et innumerabiles homines obruant, urbes[que] plurimas evertant, plerumque tamen eis et vallorum robore et viribus et multitudine pugilum obviatur. Huic autem atrocissimo malorum nullis viribus, nullo ingenio obsisti potest quo minus quisque, quem sua sors tetigerit, irremediabili morbo deperat. Si igitur haec a divina natura provenire dixeris, nostra scelera vindicante, tecum indubitate sentiam, quae saeculum hoc, non plumbeum, sed terreum, fictile, immo arenosum, et ad quodlibet nefas pronum, ulciscitur." For the diplomatic maneuvering and subsequent wars, see Ludovico Frati, "La Lega dei Bolognesi e dei Fiorentini contro Gio. Galeazzo Visconti (1389–90)," *Archivio storico lombardo* 16 (1889): 5–21; and Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955; rev. ed., Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), 28–30.

as Seneca offered a welcome antithesis to the argumentative world of dialectic.⁹ Moved by the image of Santo poring over Senecan treatises, Vergerio rededicated himself to similar studies. They would give his life useful direction and keep his mind focused.¹⁰

By repeatedly emphasizing his recourse to authors such as Seneca, Vergerio seemed engaged in a therapeutic quest to convince himself and others of his happiness. Yet his commitment to Stoic ideals proved half-hearted at best. He felt that fleeing the plague presented a more reasonable approach than continuing to reside in a city so infected that one ran serious risk of contracting the disease. The Stoic sage did not fear death; however, the Vergerian sage saw no reason to hasten its coming. Moreover, Vergerio never seemed convinced of the wisdom of facing life's struggles alone. The young pedagogue battled loneliness by engaging in a lifelong quest for solace within a community of scholars. To Seneca on self-discipline Vergerio joined Cicero on friendship. There was surely an element of calculation in Vergerio's effort to create a circle of supportive friends. The scholars to whom he wrote usually had powerful and remunerative positions in society. They were potential patrons. Still, Vergerio also prized the encouragement he had received from the supportive words of Santo de' Pellegrini. Santo's praise spurred his protégé's resolve to excel in his studies.¹¹

Vergerio consistently sought solace in his program of studies. As he did, he began to reorient his educational priorities by moving toward the humanist end of learning's spectrum. Theoretically, he came to the conviction that logic had value as a means (*via*) to more fundamental educational goals. He defined the goals as facility in oratory and in a philosophy that focused upon moral as well as scientific concerns. When Vergerio sought to defend the value of his own university to a student

⁹ *Epist.*, 12-13: "Auguror te, vir egregie, cum Seneca iamdudum tuo, insomnes vigilias agere et totum otii tui tempus secum non otiose contere, iocundam equidem et praeclaram et unicuique expetibilem conversationem in qua nullus rancor, nulla potest controversia iurgiorum incidere, sed quietam semper atque pacificam, quae in honesto continue ac sancto colloquio perseveret." In general, see Hans Baron, "Franciscan Poverty and Civic Wealth in the Shaping of Trecento Humanistic Thought: The Role of Florence," *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1988), 1:195-97; and Letizia A. Panizza, "Textual Interpretation in Italy, 1350-1450: Seneca's Letter I to Lucilius," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 46 (1983): 55.

¹⁰ *Epist.*, 24, 41.

¹¹ *Epist.*, 27-30, 40, esp. 29: "Sed ad bonum finem a te haec dicta non dubito; ingens enim, ut dicunt, ad excitanda ingenia calcar est gloria."

who had transferred to Siena, he emphasized that Bologna had a superior program because the professors concerned themselves with ethics as well as physics.¹² Like many young scholars, Vergerio offered general judgments that were shaped by his own deepening convictions. Those convictions became the seeds of a revolutionary change in Western education.

Galvanized by the idealism that Cicero and Seneca had embodied, Vergerio sought to imitate their persuasive example. His letters especially indicated a deepening appreciation for the culture of Cicero. From an initial preoccupation with questions of style, Vergerio eventually embraced the deeper implications of Cicero's rhetorical culture, describing him as the "source of all eloquence"; Cicero had harnessed persuasive oratory to the compelling example of an upright life.¹³ Vergerio appreciated that rhetoric in the Roman tradition valued ethos as an especially effective mode of persuading. He likewise developed an awareness that rhetorical culture did not exhaust human learning. Eloquence enhanced one's expertise in a variety of important disciplines. Yet, on sound linguistic grounds, Vergerio observed that eloquence had little utility for the "mute" sciences.¹⁴ In the course of his career, he favored those disciplines germane to eloquence.

Before leaving Bologna, Vergerio succeeded in translating his theoretical concerns into literary form. He wrote a comedy entitled *Paulus* in imitation of the work of the Roman dramatists Plautus and Terence. Vergerio developed a special affinity for Terence, who, after Cicero, was the author that he most frequently cited in his letters.¹⁵ For a scholar

¹² *Epist.*, 30 ("Sed tamen non despero, quod, si huic studio intentum me dederò, satis abunde proficiam. Logicae quidem disciplinae, quam aliis trado, ita insisto ut eam mihi viam ad alias statuam et non finem, sed plerumque oratoriae, cuius eadem ratio est, plerumque etiam et multo studiosius philosophiae, non solum ei quae naturam rerum ostendit, sed ei quoque in qua omnis recta ratio vivendi consistit"); see also *ibid.*, 36–37 and 39 (in describing the University of Bologna, Vergerio observes: "adsunt continue qui et virtuosos et scientificos, quales ad eos spectat, actus excercent, legunt, disputant, et quaestiones, quae tum rerum varietatem, tum vitae honestatem tangunt, sedula collatione pertractant"). The University of Bologna had in fact begun to hire at minimal salaries lecturers on Aristotelian natural and moral philosophy; see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Taddeo Alderotti and His Pupils: Two Generations of Italian Medical Learning* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), 21–23, 72–95, 114–17.

¹³ *Epist.*, 13 ("Italiae eloquentiae ac honestatis universae culmen"), 29 ("totius eloquentiae fontem"), and 40.

¹⁴ *Epist.*, 43.

¹⁵ Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, lxxxv n. 1. In 1412, Vergerio wrote to Ludovico Buzzaccarini, asking Buzzaccarini to return a codex of Terence that Vergerio had lent him; for the circumstances, see Gianni Ballistreri, "Buzzaccarini, Ludovico," *DBI* 15:645.

developing novel ideas about education, Terence was an apt model. The literary structure of early Roman comedy mimicked the conventions of the Greek genre. Plots involved young men who fell in love with women forbidden to them because of their aristocratic standing. Often the women were prostitutes. After the young man's father intervened to put an end to the scandalous liaison, the lovers generally outwitted him with the aid of clever slaves and were reunited by the play's end. Generally, the resolution reconciled all members of the family. The entire drama unfolded within the confines of an aristocratic Roman household in the extended sense. The young male aristocrat, the household slaves, and the courtesan all were summoned to account for their intrigues before the absolute tribunal of the *paterfamilias*.

Comic situations in the earlier plays of Plautus underlined the authoritarian relationship of a father to his son. Paternal severity should be mirrored in filial reverence (*pietas*). Thus, the affective relationship between father and son grew more distant as the son reached adolescence. Plautus poked fun at the formality of such a rapport by presenting farcical father figures who demeaned themselves by competing with their sons for the love of a prostitute. Unless seen as farce, such profligate behavior on the part of the father might erode the social foundations of Roman political life. The aristocratic republic could ill afford to see its leading citizens surrender to uncontrollable passions. In such circumstances, the very social fabric would be rent. Plautine comedies ultimately supported the traditional values of the aristocracy.

Terence had given this traditional structure a revolutionary twist.¹⁶ Working from Greek models as Plautus had, Terence offered Roman society a more modern approach to values. To the rigid severity of the tradition, Terence counterposed a model of flexibility. Rome had evolved from an agricultural to an urban society, and tolerance on the part of the father figure reflected the changing values of the society.¹⁷ The tension between the values of rural and urban life became fixtures of Ro-

¹⁶ See Luciano Perelli, *Il teatro rivoluzionario di Terenzio*, Biblioteca di cultura 112 (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1973); Elaine Fantham, "Hautontimorumenos and Adelphoe: A Study of Fatherhood in Terence and Menander," *Latomus* 30 (1971): 970-90; Maurizio Bettini, *Antropologia e cultura romana: Parentela, tempo, immagini dell'anima* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1986), 18-49; and Grendler, *Schooling*, 250-52. Pietro da Moglio conducted significant investigations on the text of Terence at Bologna prior to 1381; see Giuseppe Billanovich, "L'insegnamento della grammatica e della retorica nelle università italiane tra Petrarca e Guarino," in *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, 365-80.

¹⁷ See the incisive comments of Bettini, *Antropologia e cultura romana*, 21-26, 41-43.

man cultural imagery. One hundred years later, when Cicero argued before Roman juries, he exploited paradigms from both contexts. In speeches like the *Pro Roscio Amerino*, Cicero highlighted the noble parsimony of agricultural society to cast avaricious urban opponents in the worst light. However, in the *Pro Caelio*, Cicero adopted perspectives more akin to those of Terence. In that instance, the conservative Roman maintained that young men needed to be handled with tolerance, especially as they discovered their sexual powers in the years immediately following puberty.¹⁸

When Pierpaolo Vergerio turned his interests toward humanist learning, he wrote the first comedy of the Italian Renaissance modeled upon the Roman tradition, with particular appreciation for Terence. In effect, Vergerio succeeded more thoroughly in grasping the cultural challenge raised by Terence than he did in grasping Terence's poetic meter.¹⁹ Vergerio found in Terence a sympathetic voice for his own developing convictions and discovered that their ideals overlapped on key issues. Like Terence, Vergerio made an adolescent male struggling with his sexuality the protagonist of his drama. Terence had likened the adolescent's erotic energy to wine. Vergerio's Paulus, at his worst, allows libidinous desire to overcome more prudent reflection. He squanders his wealth in spending binges, often to pay for courtesans. As conceptualized within the broad stream of Western humanism, therefore, the idea of freedom (*libertas*) had a dialectical quality. Negatively, humanists used the word to refer to absolute license in a hedonistic sense. Authentic human freedom, on the other hand, denoted the responsible exercise of choice guided by mature self-control.²⁰ Both Terence and Vergerio raised the crucial question of how to educate an adolescent in the proper exercise of that power of choice.

Roman comedy typically portrayed the aristocratic adolescent as naive and self-indulgent. Insulated by his social standing and susceptible to cajoling, he could easily be entrapped by those more clever and

¹⁸ There are excellent analyses of Cicero's speeches in Ann C. Vasaly, "The Masks of Rhetoric: Cicero's *Pro Roscio Amerino*," *Rhetorica* 3 (1985): 1-20; and Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: Univ. of California Press, 1993), 156-90.

¹⁹ See Karl Müllner, "Vergerios *Paulus*, eine Studentenkomödie," *Wiener Studien* 22 (1900): 234-35; Remigio Sabbadini, "Il *Paulus* di P. P. Vergerio," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 38 (1901): 464-65; and Sergio Cella, "La figura e l'opera di Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio," *Pagine istriane* 3-4 (1986): 56-57.

²⁰ Terence, *And.* 466-67; *Eun.* 430; *Hec.* 138-39; and *Ad.* 149-53, 470-71.

worldly-wise.²¹ Such adolescents obviously had need of education and, in Roman culture, the father played a central role in that education. In starkest terms, the Roman father was taught to handle his son as though he were breaking a wild horse. He must rein in youthful passion by exercising his disciplinary role with unbending severity. However, Terence challenged such conduct by fathers as outmoded and self-defeating. To meet his father's rigid standards, a son need only conceal his behavior, not change it. Terence suggested that fathers were guilty of short memories in applying such severe standards to their sons. They forgot their own youthful desires and measured youthful conduct against the subdued passion of old age.

In contrast, Terence offered the character of a more sophisticated father who tolerantly allowed his son to learn the responsible exercise of free choice. The father should not approve every desire and concomitant action on the part of the son; in that case, he would be like the pathetic figure of the plays of Plautus. Rather, the father should enlighten his son on the need to choose responsibly: a competent father corrected his son when he acted immorally and encouraged him when he acted properly. The father must consider the son's stage in human development as well the content of his action. Sons could acquire a sense of the proper use of free choice by studying disciplines (letters, music, physical exercise) which inculcated a sense of propriety appropriate to the aristocrat's leading place in political society.²² To the traditional virtues of the rural past, Terence added an urbane refinement of thought and behavior.

In the *Paulus*, Vergerio applied such insights on the moral education of an adolescent to the different social conditions of late fourteenth-century Italy. From its origins, the university system of learning had created novel circumstances which forced adolescent students to leave home. In Vergerio's comedy, therefore, the father figure is never on stage; his appearance is used once as a veiled threat which will compel Paulus to reform his profligate ways. Throughout his four years at the University of Bologna, Paulus has been given sufficient monies by his father so that he might comfortably ignore his studies in favor of much carousing. One of his household slaves, Herotes, abets his master's hedonistic ways while stealing from him. The plot of the play revolves

²¹ Ter., *And.* 910-12; and *Phor.* 270-77.

²² Ter., *And.* 55-60; *Heaut.* 213-22; *Eun.* 476-78; and *Ad.* 51-58, 101-10, 989-95.

around a dream, which Paulus describes in the opening scene. In that dream, he had seen whole new avenues for his talents: he might one day earn the crown of poet laureate, marry a beautiful young woman, and use his political acumen to become despot of his city-state. Upon awakening, Paulus resolves to change his life for the better. He proposes to excel in the studies that he had assiduously ignored till that moment because they offer the best means to the noble goals, which had finally emerged from his subconscious. For Paulus, interior motivation, characteristically tinged with vanity, plays a more important role than the external strictures of his father.²³ However, the rest of the play reveals the successful efforts of Herotes to deflect his young master from his proposed transformation.

In a speech to Paulus filled with sophistic arguments, Herotes immediately begins to put his plan in motion. That such fallacious reasoning would convince Paulus proves how remiss he had been till then in his studies. Herotes weakens Paulus's resolve by first mentioning the revelry of the Christmas season already upon them. Twisting the principle of everything in just measure, the slave then assures his master that his studies would never make him richer, given the size of his vast inheritance. Finally, he flatters the young man by arguing for the sufficiency of his native ability. Schooling rarely made persons as talented as himself any better. The speech has every hope of success, given the vain character of Paulus. Moreover, it is a clever piece of irony on Vergerio's part. In effect, Herotes inverts the cardinal principles of Vergerio's nascent humanist philosophy of education. Humanist studies were intended to help form the character of the student, not to make him wealthier. Humanist schooling should always make persons of talent even better.

To eradicate any residual resolve on the part of Paulus, Herotes then promises to find him a virgin who would forego any fee for the honor of sleeping with his "destitute master." Paulus is immediately attracted to the scheme because he is so low on funds. Through a subtle form of extortion, Herotes forces a courtesan to impersonate the virgin of his master's fantasy. However, he first rewards himself for finding the wom-

²³ PPV, *Paulus*, Perosa, ed., 322, lines 27–39: "Deus immortalis ac superi omnes! Quas mihi delicias tulit hic somnus, quos honores, quas inextimabiles ac veras voluptates! Videbar ipse mihi coronatus iam emerita lauro in patriam ivisse me, ac protinus sponsam virginem generosam mihi, quae decore superaret solem. Quis autem conventus ad me optimatium, quis omnium concursus! Ego ipse videbar consilia cunctis dare, iudicia regere, interpretari leges veteres, leges constitui auctoritate mea novas. Quid multa? Si quid exorbuissem amplius, rex eram!"

an; he "tastes the master's enticing repast" in order to insure that it is not poisoned. Herotes later passes a harrowing moment at his master's bedroom door when it seems that the courtesan had forgotten her role. However, she remembers the script at the crucial moment and recites her part convincingly.

The world of Vergerio's *Paulus* is one of swindling and counter swindling: the slave swindles his master and the courtesan, the courtesan swindles the master. The play's prologue suggests that the author undertook its composition in order to reform morals. One lesson consistent with the Roman tradition lies in the impressionable character of the adolescent. Even the most noble resolve can be corrupted by an unscrupulous counselor.²⁴ A knave such as Herotes in this instance has an easier task than he might have had under other circumstances. As the procuress of the courtesan observes, adolescent males tend to permit themselves virtually anything.²⁵ The libidinous tendencies of Paulus know no restraint from a severe father, as in Roman days. He had left home at a young age to pursue his studies in one of Europe's most distinguished universities.

In some ways, then, the play is an indictment of the university as the key institution of the educational establishment. The studies proffered by the institution offer no disciplinary alternative in the absence of the paterfamilias. Herotes epitomizes intelligence without moral restraint or sensitivity. He candidly expresses his disdain for letters because they are not easily conjoined with the sort of practical wisdom that has brought him success. Herotes characterizes himself as so learned that he can never utter the truth. The more he swears by the gods, the less he should be trusted. His primary art is pleasing his master.²⁶ The divorce

²⁴ *Paulus*, 333, lines 305-9: "Sed verum est quod dicunt, eos, qui bono ingenio praediti sunt, ut valent cum sese rectis applicant, eosdem malo suasore corruptos deterrimos fieri. Sed omnia semper in peius abeunt."

²⁵ *Paulus*, 347, lines 645-49: "Quid, si nunc coegerit comites et conventum faciat, ut solent? Spectare oportet omnia: adolescentes omnes sunt, quibus omnia licent, multaque transmittunt impunita; tum et suppressere res nesciunt."

²⁶ *Paulus*, 325, lines 115-16: "Ego, si detur optio mihi, nolim plenus esse litterarum: ita raro summae litterae cum summa prudentia coeunt"; and *ibid.*, 354, lines 817-25: "alium, qui nihil penitus audire vellet veri, cui cum facerem satis, quamquam id reor mihi natura datum, tam doctus evasi, ut nihil possim verum dicere. Si verum a me quicquam voles, contra semper ac dixeram habeto, quoque magis deos adiuro, eo minus iubeo credas: nobis enim, qui aliena vivimus mercede, omnes comparandae sunt artes, quo magis dominis placeamus." Herotes brags of his success in swindling former masters out of large sums of money: he thus forces some to become mercenaries, others expatriates, and still others monks.

of learning and moral living had dire consequences. Terence had found himself embroiled in controversy with the theatrical establishment of his day. Vergerio launched a pointed critique of the universities for an excessive emphasis on dialectic and natural philosophy and for inadequate attention to moral training. Vergerio challenged educators who dealt with impressionable young minds to show greater flexibility and greater attention to formation of character.

Previous critics of the play have seen a biographical basis in Vergerio's characterization of Paulus. With the character's name, one can defend the interpretation. And, in at least one letter from this period, Vergerio admitted that he had a difficult time concentrating on his studies.²⁷ However, there are stronger reasons that militate against such an interpretation. In Paulus, laziness and profligacy are the by-products of wealth. On those rare occasions when Paulus actually attended lectures, he could never find his place in the books, which he continually pawned to finance his carousing. Vergerio claimed poverty as his constant companion during those years. Moreover, Vergerio consistently embraced learning as a form of discipline; to labor at studies, even without significant progress, was better than to waste one's life in pursuit of pleasure. Vergerio resented the leisure permitted to wealthier students at the university. The play offered words of praise for students who devoted themselves to study and made such progress in a single year that they could dispute effectively against all opponents.²⁸

The medium of the *Paulus* is a message. By imitating Terence, Vergerio could emphasize the importance of learning that helped moral development. That was particularly important in the case of an adolescent, who confronted the urges of his libido without the guidance, be it severe or tolerant, of his father. The motivation of the youth himself, the careful guidance of his friends and advisors, and the directions of his educational institution had to compensate for the missing guidance of a paterfamilias. In a key confrontation, replete with irony, the freed slave Stichus upbraids his master Paulus, who had allowed himself to become

²⁷ Sabbadini, "Il *Paulus*," 464; and *Epist.*, 29: "Dum enim considero quot dies otiosus et inutilis egi, quot noctes marcido sopore consumpsi, non modo haec de me fingere non audeo, sed omnino alicuius umquam pretii futurum me esse despero."

²⁸ PPV, *Paulus*, 323, lines 58–61: "Dinus, isque admodum tener, quam elegans biennio hoc evasit; alter ille annum solum audivit litteras iamque cum omnibus sedulo disputat." See also the praise of the adolescent Titus, *ibid.*, 335, who studied diligently, regularly attended church, ate meagerly due to his poverty, and consistently tried to convince Paulus to amend his ways.

enslaved to his passions.²⁹ The play confirms what Vergerio's letters had also indicated: during his years as a professor and student at Bologna, Vergerio increasingly embraced the moral concerns of the humanist program of education.

In those years at the University of Bologna, Vergerio found rare moments of tranquility when he perused the writings of Cicero and Seneca, welcoming them as a source of inspiration and as a sedative for his spirit. Vergerio harbored vivid memories of violence and social disturbance from his youngest days in exile. When he entered the university, he found to his dismay a world characterized by violent verbal debate. He first taught within the Scholastic system, training pupils in dialectic. Experiences on both sides of the teacher's podium upset his inner calm. In contrast, Vergerio found refuge in the Stoicism of Roman rhetoricians. Vergerio's commitment to humanism represented a reaction to his childhood experience of political violence and his educational experience of intellectual conflict. He felt tranquil in the company of orators, who combined eloquence (*eloquentia*) with integrity (*honestas*). His educational priorities shifted accordingly: logic should no longer comprise the basis for further education. It should be subordinated to rhetoric, moral philosophy, and natural science. Those convictions proved to be revolutionary.

²⁹ *Paulus*, 332–33, lines 279–96, esp. lines 279–85: “[Paulus] Ergo eum patiar, qui vilissimus siet servus, nunc indignus libertate, ita in me agat? [Stichus] At non ita de me pater iudicavit tuus, quando libertatem dedit. Videbimus quid de te libero iudicet, de quo quidem nihil dici potest nisi scelera omnia.”

CHAPTER 3

Classicizing Oratory

During his stay in Bologna, Pierpaolo Vergerio wrote a letter to Francesco Novello da Carrara, the once and future despot of the city of Padua. Driven from Padua by the troops of Giangaleazzo Visconti in 1388, Francesco Novello had approached various Visconti enemies for support in a campaign to win back his lordship (*signoria*). Those travels had taken him to Florence in April of 1389 and to Bologna a few months later. There, Pierpaolo Vergerio saw the deposed ruler and used that visual contact as an excuse to write to him. In a polished piece of political flattery, Vergerio contrasted the general character of princes of his age to the peculiar qualities of Francesco. Most princes adopted a lifestyle that compromised their high standing and the welfare of their subjects. They lived as slaves to the pursuit of pleasure and financial gain. Francesco Novello, on the contrary, had assured his good reputation and the well-being of his subjects by supporting the study of the liberal arts. Despite disclaimers to the contrary, Vergerio intended that his letter pave the way for his move to Padua late in 1390, where he hoped to attain Carrara patronage. Except for a brief stay in Florence and summers in Capodistria, Vergerio settled in Padua until 1397.¹

Vergerio reached the city shortly after Francesco Novello had won back his position of dominance. On 21 June 1390, the citadel of the city, garrisoned by troops loyal to Giangaleazzo Visconti, fell to the Carrara army. It took Francesco Novello another month to crush residual resis-

¹ *Epist.*, 31–32. Nicoletto d'Alessio, originally from Capodistria, was chancellor for the Carrara at that time and held the office until his death in 1393; see Paolo Sambin, "Alessio, Nicoletto d'," *DBI* 2:247–48.

tance; on September 8, Paduan officials reconferred the lordship of the city in a solemn public ceremony. Heartened by that initial success, the anti-Visconti coalition, which then consisted principally of Francesco Novello and his allies in Florence and Bologna, planned to weaken Giangaleazzo further by reestablishing Della Scala rule in Verona and by attacking Francesco Gonzaga, Mantuan supporter of Visconti aggression. The coalition's armies launched a first attack in the winter of 1390–1391, and by the summertime they had marched deep into Milanese territory, threatening Bergamo and Brescia.²

Vergerio followed these events closely and sent letters to his friend Giovanni da Bologna analyzing the conflict. He used the letters to enrich his dossier as a political strategist. The first letter was written in January 1391, before the outbreak of hostilities. Vergerio confessed that he had difficulty in sorting out truth from false rumor. He judged the situation to be explosive: Visconti politics had polarized the Italian world. Openly or clandestinely, all the Italian states had chosen sides. Vergerio depicted the struggle in the starkest of moral terms. Giangaleazzo Visconti represented the cause of evil tyranny; the forces allied against him upheld the cause of liberty.³ While Giangaleazzo sought to delay the outbreak of hostilities, his opponents, because they had limited financial resources, wished to provoke a full-scale battle. The campaign unwound according to that pattern: the coalition as the aggressor and Giangaleazzo as the cautious delayer, hoping to exhaust his opponents' resources in a drawn-out struggle.

In subsequent letters, Vergerio followed the failure of the coalition's winter campaign, the dramatic success of the coalition early in the summer, and the disappointing retreat of the coalition's troops to Padua at summer's end. Behind the military events, Vergerio attempted to read deeper political lessons. After the winter campaign had failed, he excoriated the leadership for immediately seeking scapegoats. Vergerio felt that politicians resorted to conspiracy theories to obfuscate the collective failure of their own policies.⁴ Moreover, Vergerio found Giangaleazzo's

² M. Chiara Ganguzza Billanovich, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Novello," *DBI* 20:656–62.

³ *Epist.*, 46–53, 58; and David Robey, "P. P. Vergerio the Elder: Republicanism and Civic Values in the Work of an Early Italian Humanist," *Past and Present*, no. 58 (February 1973): 9–11.

⁴ *Epist.*, 68: "Quidam in eo congressu de suscepta fide, falso, ut ego existimo, infames habiti sunt. Verum sic fieri in magnis rebus solet, ut, cum exitus non plene respondeat spei, et temere quid aut per ignaviam actum sit, crimen errorque multitudinis transferatur in paucos." Leonardo Smith, *ibid.*, 68 n. 2, cites evidence from the *Corpus Chronicorum Bono-*

strategy of avoiding pitched battle rather puzzling. Judging the Visconti ruler intent on subjugating all of Italy, Vergerio felt that he had no hope of achieving his goal without defeating the coalition in full-scale battle.⁵

Much of Vergerio's final analysis turned upon his conviction that both sides in the Italian struggle pursued myopic policies which ultimately threatened their very existence. Incessant local rivalries ended up pitting one alliance of Italian city-states against another. Such wars understandably attracted the attention of foreign powers, given the economic wealth of the peninsula. If civil war itself did not portend suicide for the states of Italy, then the tendency to drag useless foreign allies into the conflict did. "This is our long-standing custom: Italians cannot wage war between themselves without involving the rest of the world in our insane labors."⁶ After the war, rumors had begun to circulate that King Charles VI of France (1380-1422) and Emperor Wenceslaus of Germany (1378-1410) planned to invade Italy. Vergerio may have wished to highlight the stupidity of Italian bickering by suggesting that even those two inept rulers presented a serious threat.

Vergerio's letter to Francesco Novello and his war correspondence failed to win the patronage of the Carrara family. In letters through 1394 Vergerio still complained regularly of financial difficulties. To help meet his expenses, he continued to teach logic while pursuing further degrees at the University of Padua. He also received some assistance from Francesco Zabarella, who had come to teach canon law at the university shortly after the restoration of Carrara rule. He depended especially upon the financial help of his hometown friend, Santo de' Pellegrini. Without that support, Vergerio candidly admitted that his life would have been very different. Compelled to live in Capodistria on the

niensium that Astorre Manfredi da Faenza (*signore* from 1377-1404, d. 1405) had plotted to kill John Hawkwood and Francesco Novello.

⁵ *Epist.*, 71-78, where Vergerio's analysis seems dictated, in part, by the need to demonstrate that the League had won the campaign.

⁶ *Epist.*, 79: "Quid enim opus erat ad haec intestina et, ut ita dicam, civilia bella exterarum gentes advocare? Abunde furoris et virium est ut in semet ruat Italia. Sed vetus hic mos est. Nequit in se bellum agere nisi et reliquum orbem insanis laboribus suis admisceat." To exemplify his argument (*ibid.*, 80), Vergerio pointed to the support that Count Jean III d'Armagnac promised to the League's forces, so that they might trap Giangaleazzo's army in a fatal vise. Instead, the count delayed his arrival far beyond the planned date, and his army retreated quickly into France after its defeat at Alessandria on 25 July 1391 and his death the following day. Because Giangaleazzo did not have to fight a war on two fronts, he could outlast the League and force the retreat of its army. Cf. Vergerio's evaluation of John Hawkwood, *ibid.*, 68-69; and Quentin Skinner, *The Renaissance*, vol. 1 of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), 74-77.

meager resources that remained to his family after the War of Chioggia, Vergerio would have dissipated his energies with no access to liberal studies.⁷

Vergerio thus gambled that he might improve his attractiveness to a princely patron by lengthening his curriculum of studies and assuring the recommendations of prestigious intellectuals. Official documents from Padua indicate that, by 13 October 1394, Vergerio had achieved the degree of doctor of the arts and medicine and had proceeded to the study of civil law.⁸ He may also have studied rhetoric with Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna because he had the opportunity to attend Giovanni's university lectures or to arrange for private tutoring. From 1380 to 1383, Conversini had served Francesco da Carrara il Vecchio as one of the regime's secretaries. He returned to Padua in the spring of 1393 to accept a public lectureship in grammar and rhetoric at the university. At the end of that year, after the death of Nicoletto d'Alessio, Giovanni assumed the office of chancellor.⁹ While Vergerio continued to nurture

⁷ The evidence that Vergerio continued to lecture on logic at the University of Padua is discussed by Smith, *Epist.*, 484n. For the support of Santo de' Pellegrini, see *ibid.*, 148–50. Vergerio lived with Francesco Zabarella for a time, probably when he first moved to Padua, and Zabarella helped him obtain books and take examinations. See *ibid.*, 130, and Vergerio's remark in his tribute to Zabarella in 1417 (*ibid.*, 365): “quamobrem interdum quidem ei domesticus fui, semper autem familiaris.” See further Gasparo Zonta, *Francesco Zabarella (1360–1417)* (Padua, 1915), 18–20; and Nicholas Mann, “Arnold Geilhoven: An Early Disciple of Petrarch in the Low Countries,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 74–76. Leonardo Smith offers evidence that Vergerio lived “in contrata Ruthenae” on 18 October 1394. At that time, Zabarella had his residence “in contrata Sanctae Margaritae,” where he had moved in 1391. See Smith, *Epist.*, 107 n. 1; and Claudio Bellinati, “La casa canonica di Francesco Petrarca a Padova: Ubicazione e vicende,” in *Contributi alla storia della chiesa padovana nell'età medioevale* 1, *Fonti e ricerche* 11 (Padua: Istituto per la Storia Ecclesiastica Padovana, 1979), 111–12.

⁸ Leonardo Smith, “Note cronologiche vergeriane, III–V,” *Archivio veneto*, ser. 5, 4 (1928): 92–96; and Smith, *Epist.*, xvi.

⁹ See Remigio Sabbadini, *Giovanni da Ravenna insigne figura d'umanista (1343–1408)*, *Studi umanistici* 1 (Como, 1924), 74–78, 99–104; Alfredo Galletti, *L'eloquenza (dalle origini al XVI secolo)*, *Storia dei generi letterari italiani* (Milan, 1904–38), 553–57; Luciano Gargan, “Giovanni Conversini e la cultura letteraria a Treviso nella seconda metà del Trecento,” *IMU* 8 (1965): 132–34; R. G. G. Mercer, *The Teaching of Gasparino Barzizza, with Special Reference to His Place in Paduan Humanism*, *Texts and Dissertations Series* 10 (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1979), 16–17; Benjamin G. Kohl, “Introduction,” in Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, *Dragmalogia de eligibili vitae genere*, H. Lanneau Eaker, ed. and trans., Bucknell Renaissance texts in translation, in conjunction with The Renaissance Society of America: Renaissance Texts Series 7 (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1980), 13–30; and John M. McManamon, “Innovation in Early Humanist Rhetoric: The Oratory of Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder,” *Rinascimento*, n.s., 22 (1982): 4–5. Though Leonardo Smith has proposed that Vergerio studied under Giovanni in private, he could also have attended the university lectures. Students at Padua had studied the arts and medicine simultaneously for over fifty years. See

contacts with a group of doctors and scientists, he now emphasized his humanist studies (*studia litterarum, studia eloquentiae aut scribendi, exercitium litterarum*) when he described his life in Padua.¹⁰ They were to be the bridge to political service.

Vergerio depicted himself as a dedicated student in those Paduan years. He claimed that he often attended two or three lectures on a single day. Rising before dawn, he studied by candlelight when necessary. He claimed that he rarely left his house except to attend lectures at the university. When he needed to take a break, he preferred a short walk within the confines of his own garden. Vergerio allowed only his friendship with Francesco Zabarella to break that rigorous schedule. When Vergerio knew that Zabarella had the following day free from lecturing, he would stop by Zabarella's house in the evening to play board games or amuse himself in writing exercises. Even when the two friends retreated to the Euganean hills to hunt and fish, they brought along copies of Terence, Virgil, and Cicero. Discussions of Cicero kept them up well into the night.¹¹

During the years in Padua, Vergerio's friendships acquired a tint of political calculation. Through his personal letters, Vergerio contacted prominent figures from the various city-states that comprised the

Smith, *Epist.*, 109 n. 2; Nancy G. Siraisi, *Arts and Sciences at Padua: The Studium of Padua before 1350*, Studies and Texts 25 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), 55–58; and Lucia Rossetti, "Lo Studio di Padova nel Quattrocento: Nota informativa," in Antonino Poppi, ed., *Scienza e filosofia all'Università di Padova nel Quattrocento*, Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova 15 (Padua: Centro per la storia dell'Università, and Trieste: LINT, 1983), 11–12. Ronald G. Witt, in "Still the Matter of the Two Giovanni: A Note on Malpighini and Conversino," forthcoming in *Rinascimento*, n.s., 35 (1995), argues that Vergerio did not study formally with Giovanni Conversini. I follow here the revised chronology for Conversini's Paduan sojourns as defined by Luciano Gargan, "Per la biblioteca di Giovanni Conversini," in R. Avesani, M. Ferrari, T. Foffano, G. Frasso, and A. Sottili, eds., *Vestigia: Studi in onore di Giuseppe Billanovich*, Raccolta di studi e testi 162–63 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 1:378–80.

¹⁰ See *Epist.*, 98, 99, and 107.

¹¹ *Epist.*, 107, 153–54. Recently, scholars have identified codices of the *Tragedies* of Seneca with autograph notes by Zabarella (Venice, Bibl. Nazionale Marciana, cod. Marc. lat. XII.26 [3906]) and Vergerio (Oxford, Bodleian, cod. Auct. F.I.14 and a copy in Trent, Museo and Bibl. Nazionale, cod. W.43), all of which date from the late fourteenth century. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Iter* 2:240b–41a, 6:232a–b; and Klára Csapodi-Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz, Studia Humanitatis*: Veröffentlichungen der Arbeitsgruppe für Renaissanceforschung 6 (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1984), 23–24, 134–35 (#96). Ezio Franceschini, in his "Glosse e commenti medievali a Seneca tragico," *Studi e note di filologia latina medievale*, Pubblicazioni della Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (S. Quarta): Scienze filologiche 30 (Milan, 1938), 103–4, described Vergerio's notes as "redatte in un latino assai interessante."

anti-Visconti front. His correspondents included Pellegrino Zambecari, chancellor of the Bolognese regime, Zaccaria Trevisan, a powerful young member of the Venetian oligarchy, Michele da Rabatta, virtual prime minister of the Carrara despotism in Padua and administrative vicar for the patriarchate of Aquileia from 1394 to 1395, and Coluccio Salutati, humanist chancellor of the Florentine Republic.¹² Of them all, Vergerio saw Salutati as the most important, and he cultivated that relationship most actively. In fact, Vergerio used a strategy first employed by Salutati himself.

To become prominent in the humanist movement, Salutati had corresponded with Petrarch, the movement's recognized leader, in the years immediately before Petrarch's death in 1374. Exploiting the genre of the personal letter that Petrarch himself had rediscovered, Salutati expressed intense admiration for the aged scholar. Yet Salutati did not conceal his insecurity about their late-blooming relationship. In fact, Petrarch wrote only one letter in response to those he had received from the rather obscure notary. However, Salutati had brought Petrarch within his collected letters, and he furthered the impression of intimate friendship by writing two letters to commemorate Petrarch after his death. With fulsome praise, Salutati characterized Petrarch as superior to Virgil in his poetry and to Cicero in his prose.¹³

Vergerio likewise attached himself early in his career to Salutati. His letters to the Florentine chancellor in 1391 sought Salutati's imprimatur for his humanist orthodoxy. Having made great progress through contact with Salutati in Florence, Vergerio now claimed that he had lost momentum because he could no longer participate directly in the discussions that Salutati sponsored at the convent of the Augustinian friars. Their letters supplied the best bond in lieu of direct contact. Vergerio looked to Salutati for guidance in the way of moral living, an area of education that had fallen within the competence of ancient "orators and philosophers."¹⁴ That remark indicates an important development in Vergerio's own approach to humanism during his years of study in Padua.

¹² *Epist.*, 53–66, 97–101. For Vergerio's relationship to Salutati, see also Marcello Aurigemma, *Studi sulla cultura letteraria fra Tre e Quattrocento (Filippo Villani, Vergerio, Bruni)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1976), 61–66.

¹³ Benjamin G. Kohl, "Mourners of Petrarch," in Aldo Scaglione, ed., *Francis Petrarch, Six Centuries Later: A Symposium*, North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures: Symposia 3 (Chapel Hill, N.C., and Chicago, 1975), 345, 347–48. Giovanni Boccaccio had once described Petrarch as the equal of Virgil in poetry and Cicero in prose.

¹⁴ *Epist.*, 65–66.

The art of public speaking increasingly became Vergerio's preferred medium of expression. Whether through studies with Giovanni Conversini or through his own scrutiny of Cicero, Vergerio's reliance on his abilities as an orator multiplied. His rhetorical works help us to reconstruct the convictions he reached during those crucial Paduan years. What Vergerio praised in the orations of others represented the techniques of effective oratory that he had determined to be imperative. In many ways, Vergerio simply recapitulated the standard system of rhetoric offered in "Ciceronian" handbooks like the *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.¹⁵ The most promising students of oratory came equipped for their task with such attributes as intelligence and a voice that projected well outdoors. Successful speakers focused on content (*inventio*) as well as style (*ornatio*). Vergerio appreciated the persuasional power of rational argumentation (*logos*), ethical conviction (*ethos*), and emotional appeals (*pathos*), and he sought to harness those modes of persuasion to stylistic virtues of clarity and decorum. Stylistic figures should be accommodated to the subject matter, lest the style detract from the seriousness (*gravitas*) of the issues at hand.

In addition, Vergerio gained a sense of the ways in which those classical principles had to be adapted to the modern political setting. Here Giovanni Conversini almost certainly shared with Vergerio the fruits of his knowledge as a political insider. For example, if Vergerio succeeded in his goal of obtaining the patronage of an Italian prince, he would find himself immersed in the world of oligarchic politics. Vergerio himself stated his disdain for contemporary orators, who sometimes delivered speeches in the vernacular so that the entire audience might understand the contents. He preferred a Latin oration as more attuned to the classical tradition and the peculiar skills of humanists. By restricting the audience, moreover, the humanist would foster oratory more appropriate to the oligarchic politics of his day.¹⁶ In order to sensitize himself to the challenges of working for such a regime, Vergerio seems to have exploited the classical exercise of declamation. That exercise—in which

¹⁵ I am here applying an approach first used by Michael Baxandall with regard to painting; see his *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (2d ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 109–53. For the influence of the rhetorical treatises of Cicero, see John O. Ward, "From Antiquity to the Renaissance: Glosses and Commentaries on Cicero's *Rhetorica*," in James J. Murphy, ed., *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: Univ. of California Press, 1978), 25–67.

¹⁶ PPV, *De dignissimo funebri apparatu*, *RIS* 16:193A–B, 194A–B.

a student imagined himself in a famous situation which required that he deliver an oration—fostered a distinct sense of historical consciousness.¹⁷ It may well be that the circle of humanists in Padua also composed orations for important events connected to the activity of the Carrara regime.

Having whet Vergerio's appetite for a role at court, Giovanni Conversini likewise shared with him the potential dangers one might encounter there. New courtiers often aroused the envy of those whom they had outclassed. Throughout his years as a servant to the Carrara, Conversini found it difficult to hide his contempt for many of his associates. He occupied a delicate position because Francesco Novello showed him special favor. More than once, Giovanni portrayed Francesco Novello as an ignorant prince surrounded by willing sycophants. Conversini saw himself as the brains behind Carrara muscle. The prince regularly invited Giovanni to share his meals in order that the chancellor might answer his questions. He often had to explain to Francesco the meaning of the texts read during the Mass. Giovanni candidly admitted that he assumed an obsequious posture toward his patrons. "If I

¹⁷ Renata Fabbri, "Un esempio della tecnica compositiva del Polenton: La *Vita Senecae* (*Script. Ill. Lat. Ling. lib. XVII*)," *Res Publica Litterarum: Studies in the Classical Tradition* 10 (1987): 85–86, has established that the "*Vita Senecae*" and the "*Oratio Senecae*," which previous scholars attributed to Vergerio (e.g., Smith, *Epist.*, xvi n. 2), actually formed part of Sico Polenton's biography of Seneca (*Script. Ill. Lat. Ling.*, lib. XVII, B. L. Ullman, ed. [Rome, 1928], 482–85, 493–94). Before completing the work on Latin authors, Polenton had already extrapolated the chapter on Seneca and sent it to Enrico Scarampo, the bishop of Feltre. Wolfgang Speyer, "Tacitus, *Annalen* 14, 53/56 und ein angeblicher Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Nero," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 114 (1971): 351–59, published the exchange between Seneca and Nero as letters forged by a humanist; two years later, he corrected himself in "Sico Polenton und ein angeblicher Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Nero," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 116 (1973): 95–96. Polenton studied "the poets and eloquence" under Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna at Padua (*Script. Ill. Lat. Ling.*, lib. VI, Ullman, ed., 166: "Pubescens vero poetisque ac eloquentiae studens, audiebam Ioannem Ravennatem, Cursini grammatici filium"). Several declamations written during the Renaissance, which were frequently collected in humanist miscellanies, became teaching texts for instruction in oratory. Among the most popular were Salutati's declamation of Lucretia and the short speeches attributed to Athenians debating the policies to adopt before Alexander of Macedon. See Enrico Menestò, *Coluccio Salutati editi e inediti latini dal Ms. 53 della Biblioteca Comunale di Todi*, *Res Tudertinae* 12 (Todi: s.t., 1971); Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati*, *Medioevo e umanesimo* 4 (Padua: Antenore, 1963), 34; Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, *Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1983), 83 n. 23; Stephanie H. Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* (Bloomington, Ind., and Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1989), 18–50; and Remigio Sabbadini, "Antonio da Romagno e Pietro Marcello," *Nuovo archivio veneto* 30 (1915): 221–24.

have to serve, I do not want to be poor; if I have to be poor, I don't want to serve." In exchange for special food, Giovanni performed a number of demeaning tasks for Francesco Novello: he fanned him, played games with him in the evening, tickled his feet to relax him before sleeping, helped him undress for bed, and slept with his clothes on in the event the prince required his services on short notice. When other courtiers tired of Giovanni's favored treatment at court, they schemed to have the portions and quality of his food reduced. By 1402, Giovanni had resigned his post in disgust.¹⁸

Adolescent student of a disillusioned master, Vergerio seemed less jaded about the potential of political life. He viewed it from the perspective of an outsider who wished to enter, and he became convinced that oratory supplied the key to unlocking the door. His friends actually accused him of spending too much time on oratory, and his surviving corpus indicates his preoccupation in that regard from the years 1392 to 1394.¹⁹ Vergerio composed three orations for delivery at events at the court of Francesco Novello,²⁰ and he also wrote the first panegyrics of Saint Jerome, which he delivered in churches in the vicinity of Padua and Capodistria. That corpus supplies evidence of a conscious priority on Vergerio's part. His dedication to humanist studies led him to recover the classical style of oratory and the spirit of classical culture, which placed the orator at the center of public life.²¹ Orators in an-

¹⁸ See Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, *Dracmalogia de eligibili vitae genere*, H. Lanneau Eaker, ed. and trans., Bucknell Renaissance texts in translation, in conjunction with The Renaissance Society of America: Renaissance Texts Series 7 (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1980), 73–81; Sabbadini, *Giovanni da Ravenna*, 52–58, 78–89; and Kohl, "Introduction," 21, 24–27.

¹⁹ *Epist.*, 115–17; and Leonardo Smith, "Note cronologiche III–V," 96–113.

²⁰ The three orations may be declamations composed by Vergerio in order to demonstrate the advantages of following classical principles. No evidence exists to prove that they were delivered publicly. In the case of the funeral oration for Francesco il Vecchio, neither Vergerio himself (*De dignissimo funebri apparatu*, *RIS* 16:193A–94B) nor the Gatari chronicles (*RIS*, n.s., 17.1:441–44) mention an oration by him, though both treat of other orations on the same occasion. One manuscript (cod. Marc. lat. XI.56, fol. 72) labels the oration for Cermisone a *supplica*. All three of the orations survive in a limited group of manuscripts: they number twelve for the oration to celebrate Francesco Novello's return, eleven for the funeral oration and five for the oration on behalf of Cermisone. Details will appear in the finding-list of Vergerio manuscripts appended to the edition of the Jerome panegyrics forthcoming from MRTS. See also Smith, *Epist.*, 117n., 432n., 492–93 n. 3.

²¹ See, in general, Galletti, *L'eloquenza*, 411–553; Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968), 200–248; and Ronald G. Witt, "Medieval *ars dictaminis* and the Beginnings of Humanism: A New Construction of the Problem," *Renaissance Quarterly* 35 (1982): 3, 20–21.

cient Rome did not pursue oratory as a profession in itself. They acquired training in the art of public speaking in order to participate in political life.

Paduan political society in the fourteenth century had turned to a small-scale monarchy typical of many of the city-states of central and northern Italy. Pressures had increased on the communal government from both ends of the political spectrum. The great noble families sought to increase their leverage against rival families through marriage alliances. The growth of the urban poor occasionally led to public turmoil. When competition with neighboring city-states triggered wars, the Paduan commune turned to the Carrara family as proven leaders of a powerful faction within the governing oligarchy. The governing elite commissioned the Carrara to repress centrifugal forces within the city-state and to defeat the forces who attacked from without.²²

In the period of Carrara rule, the regime governed effectively when it built consensus within the ruling elite and rallied public support to its cause. Due to financial problems, however, it did not always operate according to such magnanimous ideals.²³ The regime used consultative assemblies and ritual activities to foster its goals. The Carrara despot met with members of the governing elite to determine public policy and wartime strategy. That elite included professional administrators drawn from the ranks of lawyers and notaries as well as intellectuals involved in the activities of the university. The trend to expand membership in government beyond the magnate class had begun in the communal era and continued during Carrara rule.²⁴ Even so, the regime excluded the majority of citizens from participation, particularly the lesser guildsmen. However, to prevent unrest and foster active support, those citizens were gathered together to approve decisions for war and peace and to participate in public celebrations of the regime's success.²⁵

²² J. K. Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, and New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 24–25, 82–83, 193–210, 220–310.

²³ The Visconti governors of Padua gathered testimony on the heavy exactions made by Francesco il Vecchio in the years immediately prior to his abdication in 1388; see Roberto Cessi, "Il malgoverno di Francesco il Vecchio signore di Padova," *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* 66, no. 2 (1906–7): 741–48; and Benjamin G. Kohl, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Vecchio," *DBI* 20:654. By 1400, the Carrara allegedly owned one-quarter of the territory of Padua; see Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 166–67. In general, see Kohl, "Government and Society in Renaissance Padua," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2 (1972): 205–14.

²⁴ Gatari, *Cronaca carrarese*, *RIS*, n.s., 17.1:185, 264–65, 311–15, 326–29, 528–29, 547–48, 570–71; and Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, 121–75.

²⁵ Gatari, *Cronaca carrarese*, *RIS*, n.s., 17.1:165, 198, 207, 275–76 (for triumphal proces-

By the last quarter of the fourteenth century, the regime also used ostensibly private occasions for public purposes. For example, the weddings of members of the Carrara house became occasions for public festivities. It was appropriate to involve the citizenry in the celebration of those weddings because they had a fundamentally political scope. Francesco il Vecchio and his son Francesco Novello arranged the marriage of their children to the sons and daughters of powerful neighboring ruling families: the Frangipani of Segna, the Este of Ferrara, the Gonzaga of Mantua, and the Da Varano of Camerino. The marriages formed part of a broader diplomatic strategy designed to strengthen the city-state's position in the wars of the late Trecento. The ceremonies virtually erased the lines between private and public: Padua's subordinate classes were invited to participate. The festivities were intended to foster patriotic spirit. Sharing such an occasion with the general populace underlined, in turn, the magnanimity of the regime.²⁶ In a similar fashion, the regime began to decree elaborate public funeral commemorations for Carrara family members, for Paduan military leaders, for allied generals, and for an intellectual like Petrarch whom the ruling family had patronized in order to exploit his European prestige.²⁷

Pierpaolo Vergerio consciously sensed the effectiveness of such a pol-

sions and similar victory celebrations), and *ibid.*, 94-95, 100, 125, 474-76, 528-29 (for public announcements of war and alliances and for diplomatic rituals). In general, see Benajmin G. Kohl, "Political Attitudes of North Italian Humanists in the Late Trecento," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 4 (1974): 418-24.

²⁶ Gatari, *Cronaca carrarese*, *RIS*, n.s., 17.1:59, 453-55, 498-501. Francesco Zabarella delivered sermons at the weddings of Gigliola da Carrara to Niccolò III d'Este in 1397 and of Giacomo da Carrara to Belfiore da Varano in 1403. See Zonta, *Zabarella*, 30, 33-34; and Ester Pastorello, "Un'orazione inedita del Card. Zabarella per le nozze di Belfiore Varano con Giacomo da Carrara," *Atti e memorie della R. deputazione di storia patria per le province delle Marche*, n.s., 8 (1912): 121-28.

²⁷ Gatari, *Cronaca carrarese*, *RIS*, n.s., 17.1:138 (funeral of Petrarch at Arquà, 1374); 158-59 (funeral of Fina Buzzaccarini, wife of Francesco il Vecchio, 1378), 165 (commemoration of Luciano Doria, admiral of the Genoese fleet, 1379); 440-44 (funeral of Francesco il Vecchio, 1393); 463 (funerals of Pataro Buzzaccarini and Giacomino dei Vitaliani who were fatally wounded in the Paduan victory at Governolo, 1397); 544-45 (funeral of Taddea d'Este, wife of Francesco Novello, 1404); 560 (funeral of Alda da Gonzaga, wife of Francesco III, 1405). The *Cronaca* also has a lengthy account of the funeral for Giangaleazzo Visconti at Milan in 1402 (*ibid.*, 492-96). Zabarella delivered a sermon at the funerals of Pataro Buzzaccarini (1397), Nicolò da Carrara (1398), Giovanni Ludovico Lambertazzi (1401), and Arcoano Buzzaccarini (1403). See further Margaret Plant, "Patronage in the Circle of the Carrara Family: Padua, 1337-1405," in F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons with J. C. Eade, eds., *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre Australia, and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 177-81, 189-91; and John M. McManamon, *Funeral Oratory and the Cultural Ideals of Italian Humanism* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), 292.

itics of spectacle. That is clear in his lengthy description of the funeral commemoration organized for Francesco da Carrara il Vecchio on 19 and 20 November 1393. After the elder Francesco had died in prison, Giangaleazzo Visconti released his body for burial in Padua. In his description of the events, Vergerio first emphasized their consonance with classical practice. Romans had used commemorative memorials like funeral masks and tombs to inspire the populace to heroic service of the state. The local remains of such tombs still testified to Padua's greatness in Roman times.²⁸ Vergerio then described the composition of the funeral procession which accompanied the former despot to his burial. The procession became a way to render the city-state visible and to intimate the proper political hierarchy, which culminated in Carrara leadership.²⁹

The vowed religious and the clergy of the city and surrounding countryside led the procession to endow it with an immediate air of the sacred. Next came a contingent of destitute Paduans, to whom the regime had given new clothing for the occasion. Behind them marched those individuals who had benefitted from the amnesty declared by Francesco Novello. The regime thus placed signs of generous paternalism near the front of the line of march. The heart of the procession consisted of the governing elite, grouped around the bier of the despot. The bier itself comprised the central element, and it was accompanied by the most trusted collaborators of the Carrara family. Immediately behind the bier came Francesco Novello and his eldest sons. He thus signaled to all present his intention to govern by following his father's policies. The representatives of allied foreign powers accompanied the Carrara in the procession as they had promised to do in the struggle against Visconti aggression.

Following the procession, parallel rites for the deceased further underlined the basic political division of Paduan political society into elite

²⁸ PPV, *De dignissimo funebri apparatu*, RIS 16:189A-B: "Apud quos, cum optima ratione facta omnia intelligam, ille in primis percelebris antiquitatis mos ingenue mihi probatus est, ut, cum claros viros et bene de virtute meritos munere, laudibus honoribusque vivos decorassent, plurimum tamen et mortuis officiorum praeberent, et diuturnae, quoad possent, clari nominis memoriae consulerent. Qua ratione cernimus vestustas illustrium virorum imagines, exesa situque ruentia sepulcra maiorum videmus, ac perpetua litterarum monumenta legere avidi aliquando solemus, in quibus et de summis pace belloque confectis rebus et de amplissimis superiorum nostrorum laudibus agitur."

²⁹ Ibid., 16:190A-92C. See the description in Gatari's *Cronaca carrarese*, RIS, n.s., 17.1:441-44. The Gatari made no mention of the presence of the poor and the criminals in the procession, and they paired a member of the Carrara family with the ambassadors of each of the allied states (Venice, Florence, Bologna, and Ferrara). A description of the entire ritual was published by Giovanni Cittadella, *Storia della dominazione carrarese in Padova* (Padua, 1842), 2:248-54.

and masses. The majority of the population attended the funeral mass in Padua's cathedral. Federigo da Venezia, a Dominican friar, delivered his funeral sermon first in Latin and again in Italian to assure that as many as possible could comprehend his words. While the rites proceeded in church, the governing elite and foreign ambassadors had left the cathedral to assemble in the courtyard of the Carrara Palace nearby. Seated according to strict protocol, they listened to a Latin eulogy composed by Giovanni Ludovico Lambertazzi, a lawyer and supporter of the regime. The next day, the university likewise offered its commemoration of the deceased despot, during which Francesco Zabarella delivered the sermon in Latin. Francesco's body was permanently interred in a monumental tomb in the baptistery.³⁰

Vergerio set himself apart from his fellow intellectuals, including those within the humanist movement, by intuiting that humanists could use a celebratory oration in the classical mode to enhance the political imagery of occasional public ceremonies. The oration should make the intended political significance clear to those who counted. Occasional or epideictic oratory was the least favored of the three genres specified by classical theorists of rhetoric. Those rhetoricians gave more attention to the judicial genre, which orators employed to accuse or defend a citizen in the courtroom, and to the deliberative genre, which orators used to advocate a course of policy in a political assembly. The celebratory character of political ritual in Vergerio's day endowed epideictic oratory with greater vivacity and moved the other two genres into the background.³¹

Vergerio wrote two epideictic orations for ceremonies which marked key events in the conflict between Giangaleazzo Visconti and the Carrara. The first commemorated the anniversary of the restoration of Francesco Novello da Carrara to the office of lord of Padua.³² The

³⁰ PPV, *De dignissimo funebri apparatu*, RIS 16:192C-93C, esp. 193A: "Interea princeps et qui comitabantur, composito funere, in Curiam redeunt, ac suo quisque loco atque ordine conseruerunt, ubi quadratis porticibus spatiosus erat locus, atris undique aulaeis instructus."

³¹ On epideictic rhetoric, see Walter Beale, "Rhetorical Performative Discourse: A New Theory of Epideictic," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 11 (1978): 221-26; Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, Michael Mooney, ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979), 236-38, 248-49; George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980), 73-75; and Nigel G. Wilson, "Epideictic Practice and Theory," in *Menander Rhetor*, Donald A. Russell and Nigel G. Wilson, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 11-34.

³² Following the suggestion of Leonardo Smith (*Epist.*, 117n), David Robey ("Republicanism," 8-9) assigned the oration a date of 1392, basing himself on the following remarks by Vergerio, *Oratio ad Franciscum Iuniorem*, RIS 16:205D: "Veniant itaque hoc ipso die perpetua memoria posteritati consignando, quo iam tertio superiore anno, cum urbem reciperes teque ipsa reci-

speech sought to assure lasting reconciliation between the ruler and his subjects. Vergerio recognized a need to dispel lingering suspicions on both sides, given that elements of the Paduan elite had collaborated with the regime established by Giangaleazzo Visconti. To achieve his purpose, Vergerio painted two pictures of Padua: one under Visconti domination and the second under a restored Francesco Novello.³³ The juxtaposition of those images dramatized the damage wrought by Visconti overlordship and the renewal achieved under the benevolent government of Francesco Novello.

Vergerio declared that Padua had suffered gravely under Visconti tyranny, and his first picture proved it. The violent pillaging by the forces of occupation left the city deserted and in ruin. From a flourishing urban center of civilization, Padua had regressed toward a state of decay and abandonment. Vergerio crafted the oration in such a way that he might gesture toward Padua's citadel (*arx*) to sear his point into the memory of his listeners. Built as an armory to protect the entire citizen body, the citadel had been stripped of its weaponry by a small clique of perfidious collaborators with Visconti rule. So emptied of its store of armaments, it constituted a metaphor for the city in its unprotected state before avaricious predators.³⁴

peret. . . ." Francesco Novello was designated *signore* in a public ceremony on 8 September 1390. Correct Roman reckoning in such a case would be inclusive, but the awkward addition of "superiore" by Vergerio makes me wonder if he might wish to indicate the year 1393. At that juncture (September 1393), Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna had already begun to teach rhetoric in Padua. In general, see McManamon, "Innovation," 9–11.

³³ Vergerio stitched the entire oration together using verbs of seeing and of mental imagery: *video* (204A), *cernerem* (204B), *aspicio* (204C), *videtis* (204D), *unde videre . . . videre* . . . *possum* (204E), *aspicis . . . agnoscis* (205C), *videbant . . . videres* (206C), *induc in animum . . . illius noctis imaginem . . . ex memoria colligo* (206D), *inspectante universo populo* (207A), *aspicimus* (209A), *possum memorare* (209D), *quam grate se videndum praebebat . . . quam iucundum est animis . . . aspicere . . . quam gratum de se spectaculum facit . . . postremo quam gratissime . . . videre te existimas* (209E–210B), *videmus* (211B), *quod video* (211C), *videbis . . . videbis . . . videres* (211C–D), *vidisti* (212A), *cum viderem . . . in summo honore vidissem . . . viderem* (212B), *videre . . . iucundum est . . . videre hanc urbem* (212C), *videre soliti atque in his imaginibus et nati et enutriti . . . viderent . . . cernere fas est . . . viderunt* (212E), *viderim* (213A–B), *vidisti quo pacto* (213D), *et vidimus et videmus* (214B), *in studia mea respicio . . . imagines gloriae et virtutum documenta colligeret* (214E–15A).

³⁴ PPV, *Oratio ad Franciscum Iuniorem*, RIS 16:209A–E, 212B–E, esp. 212D–E: "Urbs vidua solitudine, frequens populus suspicione, tormentis, inedia afflictus, tecta inhabitata et ruinae proxima, forum fraudibus atque avaritiae patens, Curia ornatissima quondam tum spurcissimis hominibus habitata, arx immunita et (ut vere adiciam) imminuta suspicionibus parvisque consiliis referta, armis vero et reliquis impedimentis vacua penitus in qua tu pulcherrimum omnium gentium armamentarium constitueras, ut bello quae necessaria essent abunde suppeditaret—arx, inquam, perpetuo reclusa, nullis praeter paucissimis accessibilis."

Vergerio employed a second image to portray the transformation of Padua that Francesco Novello effected, after he had fulfilled his vow to be the first to breach the walls and liberate the city. Vergerio invited his audience to look around the piazza in which they had assembled before the Carrara Palace (*Curia*). There, the victorious soldiers of their despot stood in formation, forces necessary to the city-state's survival in wartime and a colorful embellishment to civic life in peacetime. Secondly, crowds of young men attended the ceremony to demonstrate the patriotism that accompanied their regained freedom. Finally, the rest of the citizenry and foreign residents (such as Vergerio) had turned out to express their gratitude. The ceremony and the oration formed one message: public praise before such a willing audience indicated that peace existed once again within the walls of the city.³⁵

Vergerio further invited the crowd to see in that moment of celebration the visual representation of the restoration of legitimate government. Under Francesco Novello, the proper organs of government had begun to function: a council of the best citizens (*collegium*) to advise the ruler, a popular assembly (*parlamentum*) to legislate, magistrates to dispense justice, and a qualified special administrator in Michele da Rabatta.³⁶ The speech concluded with specific proposals for the governing elite.³⁷ Vergerio reminded the despot of the devastation wrought upon the fields and fortified towns (*municipia*) of the Paduan countryside. The destruction there had had deleterious effects on the city's marketplace. His analysis was shrewd: from communal days the city's economy had developed as the city succeeded in monopolizing the local market in food and goods.³⁸ To stimulate recovery in the countryside, Vergerio urged a series of measures that included subsidies, tax exemptions, and an amnesty for disloyal farmers. For the city, Vergerio focused upon two reforms. With ill-concealed self-interest, he urged Francesco Novello

³⁵ PPV, *Oratio ad Franciscum Iuniorem*, RIS 16:205D-E: "Cum enim ferro res ageretur, abstinere verbis et ferro ac viribus conflare necesse fuit, quandoquidem non facile inter strepitum hominum armorumque fragores verba pacis et laetitiae dici potuissent." On the Carrara Reggia, see Plant, "Patronage," 181-85.

³⁶ PPV, *Oratio ad Franciscum Iuniorem*, RIS 16:209E-10B, 213A-D. Kohl, "Government and Society," 207, pointed out that the only major communal office suppressed by the Carrara regime was the *maggior consiglio*, whose role was reduced to approving the election of each Carrara to the despot's office.

³⁷ PPV, *Oratio ad Franciscum Iuniorem*, RIS 16:213D-14A.

³⁸ Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, 29-56. The model for Vergerio's description may well have been Cicero's *Actio secunda* against Verres; see Beth Innocenti, "Towards a Theory of Vivid Description as Practiced in Cicero's Verrine Orations," *Rhetorica* 12 (1994): 372.

to restore the study of Latin letters and the other liberal arts.³⁹ Secondly, he must assure a greater state of military preparedness on the part of the citizenry in general and especially of key members of the Carrara family. The Visconti threat had not disappeared.

Much of the speech commended to Francesco Novello the model of his father, Francesco il Vecchio, who had undertaken protective measures for city and countryside and rewarded deserving individuals with positions of responsibility regardless of their social background.⁴⁰ Vergerio developed that theme in a second oration that he composed for the funeral obsequies of the elder Francesco. He sought to accomplish two related goals: to foster loyalty to the Carrara regime and to make policy recommendations to its members. To accomplish those ends, he played upon the power of sight as he had in the previous discourse. He first offered a verbal description of the panorama that he saw as he addressed the gathered throng.⁴¹ The geographic components of the state—the countryside, fortified towns, and capital city—were depicted in superlative terms (*uberrima, amplissima et ornatissima, opulentissima*). Vergerio wove those components into a tapestry, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship that must be maintained if Padua's economy were to prosper.

As he singled out various groups of mourners who were present, he recreated the order of the state which he had described in his account of the funeral procession. He called attention to Francesco Novello and his son to instill a sense of dynasty. The elements of greater dignity in the state were named first: foreign ambassadors from allied states, the Carrara family, the clergy, the magnates from whom Francesco had chosen his most trusted advisors, the soldiers, and the teachers of the liberal arts. To emphasize that all orders were represented, he explicitly noted the grief of the women of Padua and extended those feelings metaphorically to the city's churches and civic buildings. At the funeral all of Padua rallied around the Carrara ruler. Finally, by calling attention to the "plebeian character" of the death of Francesco as a prisoner, he

³⁹ In the peroration, *RIS* 16:214E–15B, Vergerio elaborated upon the need to patronize the humanities. He posited a direct rapport between the lack of great orators and poets in Padua and the lack of great deeds by her citizens. Humanist praise stimulated virtue; without humanists, there had never been less call for virtue.

⁴⁰ PPV, *Oratio ad Franciscum Iuniorem*, *RIS* 16:207B–C, 208A–C, 210A–B, 210D, 212B, 212C–D, 215A.

⁴¹ PPV, *Oratio in funere Francisci Senioris*, *RIS* 16:194E–95A, where the succession of verbs reads: "intueor, aspicio, intelligo, prospecto, video, cerno." See also Robey, "Republicanism," 9.

stressed the grave threat that war still presented to Paduan society. Giangaleazzo Visconti had overturned the proper political order.⁴²

To console his audience for such widespread grief, Vergerio invited them all to contemplate the great virtues that Francesco il Vecchio had manifested in his life. Vergerio progressed in his description from domestic to public virtues, mimicking the spread of power outward from the Carrara household. In his private life, Francesco had acted with special care on behalf of the men of proven worth. They had become his friends and advisors. Vergerio treated the deeds of public life in terms of war and peace. War appropriately came first; Padua had found herself constantly at war during the last fifteen years of Francesco's reign. Francesco had adopted measures to assure the defense of the entire state. As proof of his success in battle, one need only gaze upon monuments built to recall his victories, including the chapel in which Vergerio purportedly was speaking. In peacetime, Francesco had shown himself a generous patron. He refurbished parts of the city, supported the teachers of the *studia humanitatis*, and granted his soldiers appropriate rewards.⁴³ The policies that Vergerio had just celebrated were to function as a blueprint for the rule of his son, Francesco Novello.

The third of Vergerio's Paduan speeches sought to win clemency for Bartolomeo Cermisone, who had shifted his allegiance from the Carrara to Giangaleazzo Visconti after the flight of Francesco Novello in November of 1388. Vergerio prepared his judicial defense by reminding the despot that over a long period Cermisone had proven himself one of the most reliable associates of the Carrara family. Bartolomeo had led the troops of the Carrara into Verona in triumphant conquest just a few years earlier. Vergerio then proceeded to appeal for clemency, exhorting Francesco Novello to embrace the virtue that had reconciled Roman society after the traumatic experience of the civil wars. There were mitigating factors for Cermisone's conduct. Cermisone had urged further resistance rather than flight from Padua in 1388. Francesco could not hold Cermisone accountable for the mistaken strategy that led to the capture of his father and the temporary loss of Padua. Moreover, Francesco had refused Cermisone's express desire to accompany him into exile. Giangaleazzo Visconti had forced Cermisone to serve him under threat of death; Cermisone had submitted only on the condition that he never have to bear arms against Francesco. The matter was eventually resolved

⁴² PPV, *Oratio in funere Francisci Senioris*, RIS 16:195B-D, 196B-D.

⁴³ Ibid., 16:197A-E; and Plant, "Patronage," 187-89, 194-95.

as part of the peace negotiations between Milan and Padua.⁴⁴

When one compares Vergerio's orations to those of contemporaries in Padua, in Italy, and in Europe, there can be no question of the originality of his oratory. The clearest evidence emerges by comparing Vergerio's funeral speech for Francesco il Vecchio to those delivered by Giovanni Ludovico Lambertazzi and Francesco Zabarella.⁴⁵ Lambertazzi and Zabarella found the rhetorical inspiration for their methods of invention in the preaching handbooks known as the *artes praedicandi*. Those lengthy treatises offered clear and concise directives for writing a sermon that used a verse from Scripture as its organizing theme. The preacher divided and subdivided the theme into several parts and amplified each of the parts through logical arguments, appropriate comparisons, and illustrative anecdotes. The patterned sermons that Lambertazzi and Zabarella wrote for the funeral of Francesco il Vecchio illustrate that the *artes* affected the development of secular oratory. In the final analysis, it is fair to characterize both sermons as syllogisms written large. The theme and initial divisions established a series of qualities requisite for an outstanding ruler. In related subdivisions, the two preachers adduced deeds from the life of Francesco il Vecchio to prove that he possessed the specified qualities. That made it possible for them to argue that Francesco typified the highest ideals proposed for the prince in the Bible.

⁴⁴ PPV, *Oratio pro fortissimo viro Cermisone*, *Epist.*, 433–35. In the peace treaty signed at Genoa in January of 1392, a clause specified that Cermisone should have his property in Padua returned to him. By 1397, however, Cermisone had renewed his allegiance to Giangaleazzo Visconti. See Smith, *Epist.*, 432–33 n. 1; Tiziana Pesenti, *Professori e promotori di medicina nello Studio di Padova dal 1405 al 1509: Repertorio bio-bibliografico*, Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova 16 (Padua: Centro per la storia dell'Università, and Trieste: LINT, 1984), 72–73; and Michael E. Mallett, "Cermisone, Bartolomeo," *DBI* 23:775.

⁴⁵ On the three funeral speeches, see McManamon, "Innovation," 12–24; and McManamon, *Funeral Oratory*, 8–11, 91–93. For the *artes praedicandi*, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Rhetoric in Medieval and Renaissance Culture," in James J. Murphy, ed., *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: Univ. of California Press, 1983), 13–15; John W. O'Malley, "Erasmus and the History of Sacred Rhetoric: The *Ecclesiastes* of 1535," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 5 (1985): 4–6; and David L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 162–80, 242–48. For the affects of thematic preaching on secular oratory, see D'Avray, "Sermons on the Dead before 1350," *Studi medievali*, ser. 3, 31, no. 1 (1990): 208–23; and Gianfranco Fioravanti, "Sermones in lode della filosofia e della logica a Bologna nella prima metà del XIV secolo," in Dino Buzzetti, Maurizio Ferriani, and Andrea Tabarroni, eds., *L'insegnamento della logica a Bologna nel XIV secolo*, Studi e Memorie per la storia dell'Università di Bologna, n.s., 8 (Bologna: Istituto per la Storia dell'Università, 1992), 166–72. In general, see Ronald G. Witt, "Civic Humanism and the Rebirth of the Ciceronian Oration," *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 171–78.

Vergerio, in contrast, worked from the principles for composing a public speech specified in the handbooks written by Cicero and other Roman rhetors. His oration had no theme, no appeal to authorities to establish theoretical propositions, and no syllogistic reasoning to prove a conclusion about the quality of Francesco's rule. Rather, in keeping with the theory of pathos as a mode of persuasion, he sought to exploit the emotions of the moment by focusing initially on the universal grief engendered by the loss of Francesco il Vecchio and then upon the consoling character of his great deeds on behalf of the entire city-state. Vergerio also demonstrated greater attention to style, using figures of speech like apostrophe and antithesis to heighten the emotional impact of his words. Likewise, his purpose differed from that of Lambertazzi and Zabarella. Both of them sought to argue to a logical conclusion predicated upon proofs that Francesco il Vecchio possessed the virtues that made for an outstanding ruler. Vergerio attempted to depict an image in words that would inspire admiration and imitation, especially by Francesco Novello and his circle of oligarchs.

Examining funeral orations that survive from other Italian city-states and from Europe leads one to the same conclusion. Among the humanists of the late Trecento and early Quattrocento, Pierpaolo Vergerio was the first to exploit the medium of classicizing oratory. He advanced his proposal for reform of oratory according to classical standards by writing examples of such oratory. Realizing that vivid sights inspired human beings, Vergerio proposed that humanists create such sights in words. To accomplish his political purposes, Vergerio used the most vivid and memorable images. Those images stood in sharp contrast to the syllogisms employed by the leading orators of Padua, Giovanni Ludovico Lambertazzi and Francesco Zabarella. Like the visual artists of the day, humanists might effect radical change in their portraits by adopting classical standards for style and substance. They would also enhance their own political role, once they had demonstrated the ability to adduce evidence before the listeners' eyes and to shape the way in which the listeners interpreted that evidence.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See D'Avray, "Sermons on the Dead," 218-23; and Ann C. Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: Univ. of California Press, 1993), 50-59, 81-87.

CHAPTER 4

Petrarch's Legacy

Pierpaolo Vergerio proposed to exercise his humanist talents in the public square of the city. However, they bore first fruit in an important scholarly task. Paduan members of the circle of Petrarch chose Vergerio as the editor of the *Africa*, the epic poem in which Petrarch portrayed Publius Cornelius Scipio as the embodiment of republican virtues. Hoping to be best remembered for the poem, Petrarch continued to revise the text throughout his life, but he left it incomplete when he died in 1374. Already in 1377, Coluccio Salutati had urged the circle of Paduan scholars in possession of Petrarch's manuscripts to publish the work. Salutati wanted an editor to polish the text; to enhance the edition, Salutati also urged that the editor add a preface in praise of the work and a metrical series of *argumenta* summarizing the content of each of its nine books. After the Paduans had sent Salutati a copy of the autograph with Petrarch's marginal notes on metrical and historical problems in the text, Salutati amplified them with his own comments on the first two books. Although Salutati even offered to pay the costs, the Paduan circle did not choose him for the task.¹

Vergerio may have received his commission as editor for the work as early as 1393, the probable year of his second sojourn in Florence. Ver-

¹ See Aldo S. Bernardo, *Petrarch, Scipio and the "Africa": The Birth of Humanism's Dream* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1962), 168-75; Vincenzo Fera, *Antichi editori e lettori dell'"Africa,"* *Itinerari eruditi* 2 (Messina: Università degli studi, Centro di studi umanistici, 1984), 17-34; and Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, *Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1983), 185-89. Bernardo offers the fullest treatment of the poem as an expression of Petrarchan ideals and scholarship.

gerio would have left Padua shortly after the funeral of Francesco da Carrara il Vecchio in November of 1393 and remained in Florence until the following spring to study civil law. University records indicate that Vergerio was back in Padua to resume his law studies there when the school year began on 18 October 1394. His letters and official records further establish that he stayed in Padua until the end of the academic year in 1397, except for brief trips away from the city during the summer recess. While in Florence, Vergerio took advantage of the opportunity to discuss the edition of the *Africa* with Salutati and saw the chancellor's notes on the text. By November of 1396, Vergerio had finished his edition.² In the meantime, he began to wrestle with Petrarch's legacy to the humanist movement.

Vergerio actually wrote a letter to Petrarch in the name of Cicero, defending the Roman politician against charges which Petrarch made in 1345. In the most reliable codices, Vergerio's letter bears a date of 1 August 1394.³ Francesco Zabarella likewise wrote a letter to Petrarch in defense of Cicero. When free from university obligations, Vergerio and Zabarella discussed the works of Cicero and amused themselves by engaging in writing exercises. Their letters may be the fruit of such a discussion, which led them to compete in composing the better rebuttal of Petrarch's charges.⁴ The letters should be read against the background of Paduan politics as well. In June of 1394, Francesco Novello refused to

² *Epist.*, 243–44: “sive quod ibidem [Florence] iura civilia, aliquot / interiectis annis, cum tu iam abesses, audiui.” See further Leonardo Smith, *ibid.*, xvi, 204–6 n. 1; David Robey, “P. P. Vergerio the Elder: Republicanism and Civic Values in the Work of an Early Italian Humanist,” *Past and Present*, no. 58 (February 1973): 6, 33–34; and Tiziana Pesenti, *Professori e promotori di medicina nello Studio di Padova dal 1405 al 1509: Repertorio bio-bibliografico*, Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova 16 (Padua: Centro per la storia dell'Università, and Trieste: LINT, 1984), 161. Vincenzo Fera, in his *Antichi editori*, 83–88, and in his *La revisione petrarchesca dell'“Africa,” Studi e testi 3* (Messina: Università degli studi, Centro di studi umanistici, 1984), 8–9, supplies evidence that the work was circulating by November of 1396. Fera advanced the hypothesis that cod. Laurenziana Acquisti e Doni 441 is a copy of Vergerio's working manuscript for the edition; see his “Annotazioni inedite del Petrarca al testo dell'*Africa*,” *IMU* 23 (1980): 1–3, 12–13, 24–25.

³ Smith, *Epist.*, 437n. The letter must be dated after 1392, when Salutati had Cicero's *Epistolae ad familiares* copied from the recently rediscovered manuscript.

⁴ *Epist.*, 107 (“minorem seria et iucundae scripturae sibi horam vindicant”) and *ibid.*, 153–54 (“Domini nos Cicero, eloquentiae atque honestatis fons, aperiebatur. Illum regressi magnis desiderii adibamus et / in longam noctem audiebamus attentum”). Agostino Sottili, “La questione ciceroniana in una lettera di Francesco Zabarella a Francesco Petrarca (tav. IV),” *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 6 (1973): 30, 38, 54, argues that Vergerio's letter depends upon that of Zabarella. I suspect that discussions between Zabarella and Vergerio explain the similarities. If there is dependence, it is more likely to be that of Zabarella upon Vergerio, who knew Cicero better.

pay the tribute to Giangaleazzo Visconti agreed upon in the peace treaty of 1392.⁵ That act of defiance also angered Venice, Francesco's powerful ally, and threatened to plunge the Italian states into a new war. To challenge the Carrara ruler's aggressive stance might well compromise one's standing at court or even bring one's life into danger.

Vergerio used his letter to articulate a preference for Cicero's activist style of humanism over the more reserved style of Petrarch. In 1345, Petrarch had written to Cicero to censure his decision to abandon the leisure of retirement as an old man and throw himself again into the political battles of the Roman revolution.⁶ As a result of that action, Cicero compromised the lofty principles that he had previously advocated in speeches and writings and set in motion the chain of events that led to his assassination. Petrarch enumerated the inconsistent actions that characterized Cicero's final years. He abandoned the good advice of his friends and relatives as well as the cause of Pompey, his longtime patron. Instead, he embraced the cause of demagogues like Julius Caesar and Octavian. Yet he lashed out at Mark Anthony in invectives filled with rage (*furor*). Petrarch could find no positive motives to justify that series of about-faces. Cicero could not have acted out of love for the republic, which by his own admission had ceased to exist after Caesar's victory over Pompey. Nor could he claim to act out of sincere loyalty or defense of liberty (*libertas*); otherwise, he would never have curried favor with Octavian. Enticed by the false splendor of glory, Cicero acted impetuously, as though he were an adolescent and not a wise old sage. He should have remained in philosophical retreat as a silent protest against the destruction of the republic by the warlords of the Roman revolution.

The consequences for Cicero were dramatic: he had returned to politics disarmed of his greatest political weapon, his ethos as a public speaker. Ancient rhetorical theory had identified three ways for the orator to persuade an audience: by the strength of his arguments (*logos*), by the emotional response aroused within his listeners (*pathos*), and by the convincing character of his person (*ethos*). The Roman tradition of

⁵ M. Chiara Ganguzzo Billanovich, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Novello," *DBI* 20:658.

⁶ *Le familiari* 24.3 (Rossi and Bosco, eds., 4:225–27). See further Giuseppe Billanovich, "Petrarca e Cicerone," in *Letteratura classica e umanistica*, vol. 4 of *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, Studi e testi 124 (Vatican City: BAV, 1946), 88–106; and Hans Baron, "The Memory of Cicero's Roman Civic Spirit in the Medieval Centuries and in the Florentine Renaissance," in *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1988), 1:120–21.

public speaking had broadened the question of character and made it central to matters of political persuasion. Whereas Aristotle had circumscribed ethos to achieving credibility during one's speech, the Romans felt that the values advocated had to be consistent with one's previous life. For the Romans, ethos became an all-embracing integrity. By his praise for tyrants like Caesar and Augustus and his censure of Anthony, Cicero had irreparably vitiated his lifelong commitment to republicanism.⁷

Zabarella and Vergerio took issue with Petrarch's historical interpretation and his values. In defending Cicero, they accused Petrarch of underestimating the importance of the active life for the humanist intellectual. Zabarella wrote a shorter and less impassioned defense, which began where Petrarch had ended, with Cicero's death. Whereas Petrarch had rightly asserted that Cicero might have enjoyed blessed leisure in philosophical retreat, Cicero himself had the courage to take a stand on controversial matters that placed his life in danger. Given that nothing was more excellent than the pursuit of virtue, Cicero's death must be labeled an act worthy of the best philosopher. His political commitment late in life harmonized with his deeds as a young politician, when he had saved Rome from the threat of Catiline. His values were consistent and his eloquence in no way compromised.

Zabarella then moved on to Cicero's change in attitude toward Julius Caesar. He had appropriately adapted his public stand to the evolution of Caesar's politics. Zabarella thus suggested the wisdom of pragmatism in politics, a theme which Vergerio also developed. Cicero had censured Caesar when he seemed to practice a demagogic politics (*popularis Caesar*) and supported him when he seemed to aid the republic (*reipublicae frugi*). Likewise, Cicero had denounced Anthony for attempting to plunder Rome's resources. Zabarella closed his letter in rather gentle terms. In his estimation, Petrarch really wished to lose the debate. His personal preference for a solitary life of *otium* led him wrongly to cen-

⁷ *Le familiari*, Rossi and Bosco, eds., 4:226-27: "Doleo vicem tuam, amice, et errorum pudet ac miseret, iamque cum eodem Bruto 'his arti-/bus nihil tribuo, quibus te instructissimum fuisse scio.'" [Cic. *Ad Brut.* 1.17.5] Nimirum quid enim iuvat alios docere, quid ornatis-
simis verbis semper de virtutibus loqui prodest, si te interim ipse non audias? Ah quanto satius fuerat philosopho praesertim in tranquillo rure senuisse. . . ." On ethos, see George Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World 300 B.C.-A.D. 300* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), 57, 100-101; Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980), 68, 80-81; and James M. May, *Trials of Character: The Eloquence of Ciceronian Ethos* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988), 3-12.

sure Cicero for sacrificing his life in public *negotium*.⁸

Vergerio shared certain lines of defense with his esteemed mentor and friend. Both sought to demolish the contention that Cicero had betrayed his integrity by returning to public service. Rather, the act was a dramatic endorsement of a life dedicated to public service. Moreover, Vergerio similarly evaluated Cicero's conduct toward Julius Caesar. Cicero utilized praise or blame depending upon the course of actions that Caesar had adopted. Yet there are significant differences between the two letters. Vergerio wrote in the name of Cicero. Proficient in declamation, Vergerio played the historical person, and thus indicated a close identification with Cicero as the ideal orator. Petrarch had accused Cicero of behaving like a headstrong *adolescens*. With obvious relish, Vergerio played that same role in criticizing Petrarch. Petrarch's accusations undermined the suppositions upon which Vergerio intended to build his career. He still hoped to make his humanist skills the basis for a career in politics. Finally, Vergerio knew the Ciceronian corpus better than Zabarella, and he demonstrated a more subtle understanding of Roman politics.

Vergerio began by asserting that Cicero had always been active in politics, on rare occasions in arms but usually as an orator. One should not be surprised by the flexibility of his positions: that followed from the variation in historical circumstances and human motives. Nor was Petrarch realistic in imagining Cicero free of rivals. Though politics represented the way of life most beneficial for others, it attracted its fair share of immoral persons. Any individual of integrity could expect to arouse jealousy among some of his peers. Finally, one should not equate Cicero's pragmatism with a lack of ideological conviction. He refused to sacrifice the republic for the sake of peace. The republican system stood threatened when a member of the elite no longer had the possibility to speak freely. Safeguarding free speech was, for Vergerio, the litmus test of authentic government.⁹

⁸ Sottili, "La questione ciceroniana," 56-57. In general, see Maristella Lorch, "Petrarch, Cicero, and the Classical Pagan Tradition," in Albert Rabil, Jr., ed., *Humanism in Italy*, vol. 1 of *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 77-82.

⁹ *Epist.*, 438-40, esp. 439: "Quam ob causam ut variarem necesse fuit aliquando et animum et orationem, quando tanta erat in rebus, tanta in moribus hominum variatio. Ita ergo multa et dixi et deploravi, ac multa ex sententia, crebro ut fit, variavi." For the Roman conception of freedom of speech, see Arnaldo Momigliano, "La libertà di parola nel mondo antico," *Rivista storica italiana* 83 (1971): 520-22.

Those positions are spelled out in his response to the specific charges that Petrarch made. Once civil war erupted in Rome, pitting the faction of Pompey against that of Julius Caesar, Cicero had to abandon his fundamental quest for social peace. His alliances throughout the revolution were dictated by his perceptions of justice and worth (*dignitas*). That was especially true of his attitude toward Julius Caesar, Octavian, and Mark Anthony. Vergerio claimed that Cicero praised Caesar as long as he was convinced that Caesar was not seeking personal power but the common good. When Cicero felt that Caesar was driven by uncontrolled desire (*libido*) to subvert the public order, Cicero turned to forthright criticism. Vergerio intuited that Cicero never really trusted Caesar. In the end, Caesar's clemency had to be interpreted as an expression of absolute power, abrogating the constitutional order of laws enacted by the Senate.¹⁰

Vergerio likewise contended that Cicero had awarded praise or blame to the other revolutionary leaders as they so deserved (*pro merito*). Vergerio's discussion of the case of Octavian is especially indicative of his own aristocratic politics. Octavian earned the approval of Cicero when he safeguarded "the standing of the Senate, the liberty of the people, and the comforts of the plebeians." He viewed the Roman Republic as an oligarchy (*senatus*) acting on behalf of the politically active element (*populus*). The governing class bore a responsibility of paternal care toward the bulk of the citizenry (*plebs*). Octavian forfeited his opportunity to become a true leading citizen (*princeps civis*) by turning to tyranny. Cicero preferred to lose his life rather than sit by and watch Roman liberty (*libertas*) destroyed.¹¹

In the end, Cicero had proven to be a model of rhetorical ethos. He had consistently taught that true philosophy implies political commitment.¹² Only a coward fled from activism when it endangered one's life. Had Cicero had his wish, he would have given his life defending Rome against Catiline. His murder by Anthony's hired assassins, with the tacit complicity of Octavian, represented the supreme gesture of a life dedicated to defending the republic. Petrarch wrongly claimed that

¹⁰ *Epist.*, 440–41. For Petrarch's turn toward a more positive interpretation of Julius Caesar, see Hans Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political Literature* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968), 29–40.

¹¹ *Epist.*, 442–43.

¹² *Ibid.*, 444, where Vergerio adduced passages from Cicero *Tusc.* 5.4.10, *Div.* 2.1.1, and *Att.* 10.8.8.

Cicero had lived in a way that was inconsistent with his teachings. Cicero's political ideal remained the free expression of one's convictions within the ruling aristocracy. He never reduced that ideal to attachment to an individual leader.

Contemporary scholars since Hans Baron have generally seen this debate in terms of republican liberty and tyranny.¹³ The protagonists—Petrarch, Zabarella, and Vergerio—saw it in terms of political involvement by a humanist orator in the revolutionary struggles of the Roman Republic. Vergerio vigorously endorsed the historical relevance of Roman republican thought and the appropriate commitment of a humanist to public service. Ideal liberty (*libertas*) for Cicero never involved the creation of a political system that recognized some sort of inalienable right. Nor did it grant to powerful members of society the right to act in whatever way they pleased. Roman political society had enacted laws which granted certain rights to the members of that society. Romans felt that liberty should contain an element of restraint. It also stood in dynamic tension with the notion of a prestige (*dignitas*) possessed by the dominant element in Roman political society. Social concord depended in large part on respect for liberty on the part of the powerful.¹⁴

In agreement with Cicero's ideas, Vergerio defended the appropriateness of such a political society in his own day. Those who formed part of the ruling elite must always be free to express their political opinions. When individuals placed self-interest or factional control over the common good (*res publica*), Roman society was plunged into violence and chaos. Roman historical legend closely associated unrestrained sexual desire (*libido*) with political violence and lust for power.¹⁵ The first Roman revolution against Etruscan tyranny purportedly gained revenge for

¹³ Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955; rev. ed., Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), 121–29; David Robey, "Republicanism," 3–17; and Robey, "Aspetti dell'umanesimo vergeriano," in Vittore Branca and Sante Gracioti, eds., *L'umanesimo in Istria*, *Civiltà veneziana*: Studi 38 (Florence: Olschki, 1983), 11–12.

¹⁴ See Chaim Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1950), 7–30; and Neal Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: Univ. of California Press, 1988), 70–104, 150–51, 189, 194–95.

¹⁵ Ann C. Vasaly, "Personality and Power: Livy's Depiction of the Appii Claudii in the First Pentad," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 117 (1987): 203–26, develops this same theme with regard to Livy's treatment of the Appii Claudii. The Paduan Regia had a "Camera of Lucretia."

the brutal rape of Lucretia. Both the rape and the political designs of the Tarquins constituted a passion to possess unlawful power over free individuals of worth. Moreover, the Tarquins had perfidiously attempted to conceal their designs to violate the body politic under the guise of demagogic populism. Vergerio's Cicero perceived the same sort of unrestrained desire for domination at critical moments in the evolution of the policies of Caesar, Octavian, and Anthony.

The surest political conviction expressed by Vergerio in his letter, therefore, endorses the viability of the republican system of Roman government because that system emphasized the political worth of proven individuals within the context of a restricted aristocracy. It may be an endorsement of Florence's republican system against the tyranny of Giangaleazzo Visconti, as Hans Baron has argued. That would be true insofar as Florence represented the sort of harmonious oligarchy that Cicero and Vergerio applauded and insofar as Giangaleazzo represented a demagogic tyrant who trampled upon the prestige of the politically elite in grabbing absolute power. It may also be a warning to Francesco Novello. Insofar as the Carrara despot operated as the *princeps civis* according to the model of the good Octavian and not as an absolute tyrant, he deserved public support. However, Vergerio saw dangerous demagoguery in Francesco Novello's aggressive policies which threatened the stability of Paduan society. Through Cicero, Vergerio carefully delineated the proper power that the Carrara should exercise in their state.

Vergerio left no ambiguity regarding his position on the social role of a humanist intellectual. In opposition to Petrarch's lifelong ambivalence about political activism, Vergerio offered an unconditional endorsement.¹⁶ In fact, Vergerio urged that humanists express their free convictions and that societies contrive political structures to safeguard free speech. Genuinely free public advocacy became the criterion for the

¹⁶ Regarding Petrarch's limited political activity, see Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968), 31–62; Manlio Pastore Stocchi, "La biblioteca del Petrarca," in *Il Trecento*, vol. 2 of *Storia della cultura veneta* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1976), 536–57; and Nicholas Mann, "Petrarca e la cancelleria veneziana," in *Il Trecento*, vol. 2 of *Storia della cultura veneta* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1976), 517–35. In general, see O. B. Hardison, Jr., "The Orator and the Poet: The Dilemma of Humanist Literature," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 1 (1971): 33–44; Ronald G. Witt, "Medieval *ars dictaminis* and the Beginnings of Humanism: A New Construction of the Problem," *Renaissance Quarterly* 35 (1982): 1–35; and John W. O'Malley, "Grammar and Rhetoric in the *Pietas* of Erasmus," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 18 (1988): 81–98.

authentic humanist and the authentic political society. Internal peace would be best assured when the consciousness of the powerful few was raised. Humanists would assist the proper functioning of government by awarding appropriate measures of praise or censure for the political conduct of the elite. Public panegyric and written history became the privileged media through which humanists might instill civic values and exemplify their realization in historical deeds.

Around 1395, Zabarella and Vergerio decided to test their convictions before a Paduan audience. On the anniversary of Petrarch's death (19 July), Vergerio preached a sermon on the life, morals, and learning of Petrarch. In 1397, after Zabarella had become archpriest of Padua's cathedral, he made the ceremony an annual event. Using his previous experience in praising Saint Jerome in a public panegyric, Vergerio organized his sermon by drawing primarily upon Petrarch's autobiographical letter, the *Epistola ad posterios* (ca. 1361). To fill in those years of Petrarch's life that were not treated in the *Epistola*, Vergerio researched other Petrarchan sources.¹⁷ In the final analysis, however, the entire structure of the sermon reflects Vergerio's epistemological presuppositions and cultural priorities.

Throughout the sermon, Vergerio communicated a sense of Petrarch's inner restlessness.¹⁸ His youthful infatuation with Laura ended with her sudden death in the plague of 1348. Vergerio judged the affair in generous terms. Petrarch's *libido* was typical of adolescence, particularly in the strength of his passion (*acerrimus*). However, it was a love marked by admirable moral qualities, especially in Petrarch's dedication to Laura alone. Vergerio then underlined the importance of Petrarch's conversion from the study of civil law to the study of the humanities. With his father's encouragement, Petrarch had spent four years at the

¹⁷ Ernest H. Wilkins, *Petrarch's Later Years*, Publication 70 (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1959), 268, states that the "Letter to Posterity" (*Sen.* 18.1) was mainly written before 1361. Petrarch did make subsequent insertions in the text from 1370 until his death in 1374. For the ceremony in Padua, see Giuseppe Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato I: Lo scrittoio di Petrarca*, Raccolta di studi e testi 16 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1947), 361–68. Because Vergerio drew so heavily upon the letter of Petrarch, some historians have rated his sermon of minimal historical importance; see, e.g., Carmela Marchente, *Ricerche intorno al "De principibus Carrariensibus et gestis eorum liber" attribuito a Pier Paolo Vergerio seniore*, Università di Padova: Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia 23 (Padua: CEDAM, 1946), 56–60. Marcello Aurigemma has offered a more balanced assessment; see Aurigemma, "Il *Sermo de vita Francisci Petrarcae* di Pier Paolo Vergerio," in Giorgio Varanini and Palmiro Pinagli, eds., *Studi filologici, letterari e storici in memoria di Guido Favati*, Medioevo e umanesimo 28–29 (Padua: Antenore, 1977), 1:33–34.

¹⁸ Aurigemma, "Il *Sermo*," 36–50.

University of Montpellier and three at the University of Bologna in pursuit of his law degree. Vergerio stressed that the charged encounter with his father, when Petrarch had tried to hide his literature books, manifestly revealed his ambivalence toward a career as a lawyer. Eventually, he expressed his feelings to his father and, after his father's death, definitively abandoned law for his literary and scholarly pursuits. His sensitive personality revealed itself during the peregrinations of his humanist years. He lashed out in bitter invective against those who criticized his growing fame. He became more and more frustrated as he tried to complete the *Africa*, and he became upset in his later years if anyone merely mentioned the poem. Finally, Petrarch continued to benefit from the patronage of wealthy rulers such as the Visconti and Carrara despite repeated claims to condemn riches because they disturbed one's inner peace.

Vergerio showed his willingness to deflate the myth of Petrarch—one of the poet's most successful creations. Yet Vergerio also granted Petrarch the praise due to him. First, Petrarch combined a brilliant mind with love for recognition. Vergerio acknowledged that Petrarch had worked diligently to become Europe's leading intellectual, a position for which he possessed solid qualifications. Secondly, among Petrarch's academic interests, his love for poetry and moral philosophy dominated. That led to a concomitant disgust with the bustle of cities like Avignon and a love for the rural solitude of the Vaucluse. As a humanist, Petrarch was most at home in the amenable surroundings of that lush valley. In fact, Vergerio claimed that, in that setting, Petrarch had conceived or begun or brought to completion his greatest writings. Late in life, however, Petrarch had begun to shift his interests toward sacred letters and to matters of history and eloquence.¹⁹ It is as though he had envisioned the turn that Vergerio sought to give to humanism.

Vergerio subsequently appended the sermon as a preface to the edition of the *Africa*. He also added the *Argumenta*, a metric summary of the content of each of the nine books of the poem itself.²⁰ The original suggestion for such prefatory material stemmed from Salutati, and Vergerio accepted it. Yet Vergerio chose a different approach to the edition than that proposed by Salutati. Salutati had lobbied for a revised text that would take into account the marginal notes that Petrarch left and

¹⁹ *Petrarcae vita*, Solerti, ed., 294–96, 298–99.

²⁰ Smith, *Epist.*, 204–6 n. 3; and G. Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato*, 368.

Salutati himself expanded. Although Vergerio did see Petrarch's autograph and Salutati's notes, he rejected Salutati's proposed revisions. He convinced the Paduan heirs responsible for Petrarch's works that they should publish a diplomatic edition, which revealed that the poem had many incomplete lines and several large gaps in the narrative.²¹ While reading an autograph copy of Petrarch's letters, Vergerio had found a postilla stating Petrarch's desire to have the *Africa* burned.²² Helping Petrarch to conform as closely as possible to his Virgilian model, Vergerio issued the poem in its incomplete form. When the edition began to circulate in the second half of 1396, Vergerio received praise for having left the imperfections in the text.²³ Consequently, Petrarch's reputation as an epic Latin poet, on which he had built a healthy portion of his fame, was somewhat diminished. There are thus parallels between the less-than-flattering impression of Petrarch that followed upon Vergerio's edition and the rather melancholic scholar who emerged from Vergerio's sermon.

Vergerio's scrutiny of Petrarch's life and major Latin poem confirmed his own priorities as a humanist and distinguished them from the older generations. Rather than the life of poet in solitude, Vergerio preferred the political struggles of the orator in the city. Even so, from 1394 to 1397, Vergerio may have readily identified with the restlessness of Petrarch's spirit. Once he had completed his studies of medicine, he began another degree in civil law. Like Petrarch, Vergerio seemed caught in a dilemma between humanist and legal studies. Legal studies offered the successful student greater social recognition and possible employment in government. Yet Vergerio bridled at the literalism of exponents of jurisprudence; in his mind, legislation marked the beginning and not the end of a noble quest for equity. Like all texts, the code of law was not self-interpreting; in every instance human beings had to determine the proper application of the text.²⁴ A legalistic mentality poorly

²¹ For example, Petrarch had never versified a lengthy account of the dream of Ennius in Book 9 of the epic. Vergerio published the preparatory version that Petrarch had written in prose.

²² Fera, *La revisione petrarchesca*, 38–39.

²³ See Nicola Festa, ed., *L'Africa*, Edizione nazionale delle opere di Francesco Petrarca 1 (Florence, 1926), lii–liii; Smith, *Epist.*, 54n; Robey, "Republicanism," 33–34; and esp. Fera, *Antichi editori*, 88–94, 100–104. Niccolò Niccoli carried a copy of the edition from Padua to Florence to share it with the circle of humanists there.

²⁴ *Epist.*, 130, 158, 160–61, 168–69, esp. 160–61: "Sed altae, mihi crede, et veritas et aequitas magnisque latibulis abditae sunt; utque inter multas falsitates veritas, ita et inter multas iniquitates quod iustum est latet, neque est facile inter utrumque discernere. Saepe

served the common good. As Vergerio began to see more clearly the illusion of absolute truth in areas such as law and politics, he intensified his dream of reviving political culture according to the tenets of classical rhetoric. That dream focused on the education of an individual entering public service. How could one best prepare that limited group of talented individuals for the public responsibilities that their talents should earn? In letters to Ludovico Buzzacarini from 1396, Vergerio began to offer responses to that question. Those letters emphasized the importance for the political elite of the study of moral philosophy, history, and rhetoric.²⁵

Vergerio's restlessness also derived from vexing personal problems. He continued to find poverty a source of embarrassment for himself and his family. In 1395, when his parents once again faced the prospect of flight from Capodistria, he resented his own dependence on the patronage of others.²⁶ Those personal problems were compounded by the deteriorating political situation in northern Italy. The storm clouds of renewed war gathered ominously. In October of 1394, the patriarch of Aquileia, Jan Sobieslav of Moravia, was brutally assassinated. In analyzing that bloody turn of events in an area for which Vergerio felt great fondness, he argued that liberty had been extended too widely among those not used to its exercise. As factional rivalries exploded, liberty tragically lacked all restraint. It would be very difficult to resolve the problem because the various regional powers (the rival communes of Cividale and Udine in Friuli, Venice, Padua, the German king) all lobbied on behalf of specific candidates. Such interest in affecting the choice of patriarch derived from the longstanding prestige of the see and its vital importance to contemporary politics as a buffer between Venice and the empire. Vergerio interpreted the pope's appointment of Antonio Caetani in January of 1395 as an effort to find a compromise candidate acceptable to the various internal factions and outside powers. He was not optimistic about the efficacy of the selection: the pope's effort to please all would probably satisfy no one.²⁷

enim et / veritas mendacii et turpitudine honestatis faciem induit; itaque nil mirum si diversi de eadem re summi viri adversa iudicia dent, cum et unus atque idem saepe diversis temporibus sententiam existimationemque mutet."

²⁵ Ibid., 172-73, 176-79.

²⁶ Ibid., 129-30, 142, esp. 142: "Senes, aegri, inopes laborant, nec est eis ulla neque in se neque in aliis spes; utque nihil ad summam desit, cogitur nunc pater sponsionem, quam pro alio subierat, ipse re implere et pecuniam quidem adeo gravem exolvere, ut sit ei aut carcer subeundus aut fuga paranda."

²⁷ Ibid., 94-95, 98, 101, 110-12, esp. 101: "Vides gentem illam in summa libertate natam

The upheaval in the patriarchate coincided with a renewed offensive by Giangaleazzo Visconti against Francesco Novello in Padua. The Paduan despot's provocative refusal to pay the tribute owed to Giangaleazzo alarmed his Florentine allies, who preferred a more cautious policy. More importantly, it antagonized his Venetian allies, who momentarily abandoned the anti-Visconti League and offered financial support and troops to Giangaleazzo. In the first months of 1395, the Visconti ruler threatened to invade Paduan territory. Vergerio actually got hold of a letter from Giangaleazzo to Padua's despot, and he copied the text and sent it to select friends in order to keep them abreast of developments.²⁸ The threat of war lessened toward the end of 1395, when the parties turned their attention to problems that had flared up in the Romagna.²⁹ Vergerio felt even greater discouragement when the plague returned during the summer of 1395. The disease had struck Istria with special ferocity, and Vergerio agonized over the danger to his parents, relatives, and closest friends. He urged Giovanni da Bologna, a doctor and intimate acquaintance, to abandon Muggia as soon as the government would permit him to do so. Vergerio assured Giovanni that he stood ready to leave Padua at the first sign of plague.³⁰

Yet where would he go? His good friend, Santo de' Pellegrini, had

solutissimis legibus vivere: quae res esse damno solet iis, qui uti nesciant libertate. Sentis gravibus inter se odiis non modo privatos aut principes viros, sed et populos laborare, tam quidem ex praesentibus causis quam damnis retro latis, ac ne minus quidem ex ea quae omnium malorum mater est, invidia. Accedit ad haec summa rerum omnium copia, quae laxivire animos faciat nec sinat suae ipsos salutis meminisse, et assuetudo quaedam iam factor bellorum. Cumque dudum pacatissima regio esse solebat, nuper et externis et internis bellis exercitata est." See further Pio Paschini, "L'Istria patriarcale durante il governo del patriarca Antonio Caetani (1395-1402)," *Atti e memorie della Società istriana di archeologia e storia patria* 42 (1930): 95-99; Paschini, *Antonio Caetani Cardinale Aquileiese* (Rome, 1931), 8-22; and Paolo Stácul, *Il cardinale Pileo da Prata*, *Miscellanea* 19 (Rome: Società romana di storia patria, 1957), 239-43.

²⁸ *Epist.*, 117, 119; and Ganguzza Billanovich, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Novello," *DBI* 20:658.

²⁹ *Epist.*, 152, 164-65. Astorre Manfredi had imprisoned Azzo d'Este after the latter's aborted coup against Niccolò III d'Este in Ferrara. Because Manfredi refused to hand his prisoner over, war seemed imminent.

³⁰ *Epist.*, 141-42, 154-57, 162-63. In a letter from March of 1396, Vergerio assured Aldovrandino da Ferrara that he would assist Aldovrandino in attaining vines from the hills above Padua that could be transplanted to his land near Ferrara. However, Vergerio recommended against such a transplanting, arguing that plants and human beings changed their nature upon moving from the climate and surroundings of their origins ("In quo nihil est quod miremur, cum videamus non modo plantas et sata, quae terrae coherent, sed et animalia quoque et homines loci mutatione variari et in aliam paene naturam converti" [ibid., 167]).

worked for Jan Sobieslav, the assassinated patriarch of Aquileia. In 1395, Vergerio dedicated his efforts to assuring that Antonio Caetani, the new patriarch, retain Santo as his vicar of spiritual affairs. Vergerio personally visited Caetani in Venice, carrying with him letters of recommendation for Santo from Francesco Zabarella and Giovanni Ludovico Lambertazzi. A few months after Caetani acceded to the request, in May of 1396, Santo drowned while crossing the Stella River. Vergerio grieved for a close friend, whose companionship he had cherished through the years; it had all ended too abruptly.³¹ In the same years, Vergerio tried to exploit his connections at Venice. When Desiderato Lucio was appointed chancellor, Vergerio quickly wrote in January of 1395 to congratulate him.³² The letter had a dual purpose: it commended a bourgeois republic like Venice that affords a political role to deserving intellectuals, and it suggested that humanists like himself were deserving intellectuals. Vergerio contrasted the use that some princes made of their chancellors with that made by republics. The unnamed princes treated their chancellors as figureheads because they preferred to define policy without regard for sound reasoning. The depiction seems an ill-concealed criticism of Francesco Novello for his treatment of Vergerio's mentor, Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna. Republics, on the other hand, gave their chancellors much wider responsibilities. In effect, Vergerio suggested that republican chancellors functioned as the conscience of the government; he thus rendered homage to Salutati's role at Florence.

The letter also contained a skeletal description of Vergerio's understanding of Venetian political society, which was composed of a Senate,

³¹ *Epist.*, 119–26, 182–83. Vergerio had also met two Florentine priests in Caetani's retinue; see Paschini, *Antonio Caetani*, 22.

³² *Epist.*, 102–6. Vergerio corresponded with many influential persons in Venice. There are letters to doctors (Giovanni da Bologna, Aldovrandino da Ferrara, Guglielmo da Ravenna, Niccolò Cessi, Niccolò Leonardi), to Venetians in the chancery (Donato Compostella and Desiderato Lucio, who was chancellor from 1395–96), and to patricians engaged in civic affairs (Remigio Soranzo, Pietro Miani, Zaccaria Trevisan, Carlo Zeno, Fantino Dandolo). Vergerio visited Venice in 1395 to meet with Antonio Caetani (123, 127–31) and again around Christmastime (161 n. 1, 163). Later in Rome, he worked for the Venetian pope, Gregory XII. Such contacts, together with a flurry of constitutional activity in Venice late in the Trecento, may explain the possible sources for Vergerio's technical information on Venice's constitution. For the Venetian contacts, see Percy Gothein, "Zaccaria Trevisan," *Archivio veneto*, ser. 5, 21 (1937): 2, 17; and Lino Lazzarini, "Il patriziato veneziano e la cultura umanistica dell'ultimo Trecento," *Archivio veneto*, ser. 5, 115 (1980): 197–99, 209–13, 215–17. For comments on Vergerio's sources, see David Robey and John Law, "The Venetian Myth and the *De republica veneta* of Pier Paolo Vergerio," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 15 (1975): 22–26.

a doge, and the body of citizens united in their obedience to the governors of the republic. Vergerio figured among the first intellectuals to suggest the success of Venice's "mixed constitution."³³ Over the course of the next seven years, he began to organize a treatise which would explain the genius of the Venetian regime. Internal evidence suggests that portions of the work were written as late as 1402, and in its present state it only consists of notes that Vergerio intended to redact one day into final form.³⁴ Even so, the treatise comprises a first geopolitical analysis of the Venetian Republic. Vergerio began his study with a long section on the location of the city, her topography, and the various advantages and disadvantages that accrued to Venice as a result.³⁵ In a second, less polished section, Vergerio intended to give a detailed description of the government crafted by the Venetians.³⁶ He wished to illustrate the functioning of Venice's mixed constitution through its various offices.

The geographical portion of the treatise is dominated by strategic concerns, especially the skill of the Venetians in rendering their city safe from external attack. Vergerio described the advantages of the site as he saw them. Located in a lagoon off the mainland, the city could not be reached by missiles launched from shore nor could a large fleet of ships negotiate the narrow entrances and tides that gave access to the lagoon. Even if enemies reached the city, they would find themselves hopelessly entangled in the labyrinth of the city's canals. The shallow waters and tidal action of the lagoon's waters rendered ships of deep draft useless. The soft mud of the area excluded any overland attack. The Venetians had assured that their marking posts could be hidden when necessary,³⁷

³³ *Epist.*, 105: "Hoc nimirum ita futurum certa omnibus fides est, quod sapientissimus sit senatus, prudentissimus sit dux eius, pacatissima plebs et ad summum obsequens patribus, ac tu quoque is vir es qui consultor moderatorque iis accesseris." See further Quentin Skinner, *The Renaissance*, vol. 1 of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), 139-42; and Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), 44.

³⁴ See Robey and Law, "The Venetian Myth," 3-35; Franco Gaeta, "Storiografia, coscienza nazionale e politica culturale nella Venezia del Rinascimento," in *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, vol. 3 of *Storia della cultura veneta* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1980-81), 6-11; Gaeta, "L'idea di Venezia," in *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, vol. 3 of *Storia della cultura veneta* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1980-81), 570-72; Angelo Ventura, "Scrittori politici e scritture di governo," in *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, vol. 3 of *Storia della cultura veneta* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1980-81), 536-37; and Robey, "Aspetti," 14-15.

³⁵ PPV, *De republica veneta*, Robey and Law, eds., 38-44, lines 1-170.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 44-49, lines 171-334. For the development of Venice's constitution during the thirteenth century, see Giuseppe Maranini, *La costituzione di Venezia dalle origini alla serrata del Maggior Consiglio* (Venice, 1927), 159-312.

³⁷ Denys Hay and John Law noted that the Venetians pulled up the posts during the

and they had the foresight to build most of their bridges of wood, which could easily be destroyed during an attack.

Those defensive measures had produced distinct advantages for Venice in the course of her history. Because Venice had never experienced barbarian invasions, her population and her economy had grown steadily. Venetian wealth was primarily a function of her strong defensive position. Moreover, the city had no surrounding countryside. While admitting liabilities regarding alimentary resources, Vergerio also saw advantages since the countryside often bred internal rivalries. For example, exiles from Venice could not use the area nearby to launch a rebellion against the city. Without using the precise terminology, Vergerio intimated the absence of problems associated with the feudal nobility. Instead he painted a map of Venetian commerce that covered the entire Mediterranean and reached into the Atlantic as far as Britain. Vergerio cited the key role played by the Arsenal, a state-run industry producing a fleet of military and commercial vessels, which exploited opportunities for worldwide trade.³⁸

Having artfully developed the advantages offered by location, the Venetians likewise crafted worthy instruments of government. Vergerio used the terminology of oligarchy to describe the regime, clearly admiring its restrictive character. In the letter to Petrarch on behalf of Cicero, he had used the same terminology to describe the new political realities of Rome under Octavian. For Vergerio the *populus* did not represent the total body of the citizens, but rather the politically active element. In the Venetian regime, the *populus* corresponded to the Great Council. One could not define the Venetian elite as a pure aristocracy of birth because members of the Great Council were enrolled by law. For Vergerio, the genius of the system lay in limiting political participation to the worthy and then restricting it even more. Vergerio saw the true power in Venice in the Venetian Senate, not in the Great Council.³⁹ Vergerio

War of Chioggia; see their *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance, 1380-1530*, Longman History of Italy (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 263.

³⁸ PPV, *De republica veneta*, Robey and Law, eds., 43, lines 137-42: "Navale ingens, quod Arsenalis appellatur, intra urbem est, undique muris conclusum, in quo longae naves et fiunt novae, et factae servantur, et tempestate adversa quassatae aut vetustate consumptae reficiuntur. In eo remi, ancorae, ceteraque impedimenta navalia, arma insuper et omnis generis instrumenta bellica usque in stuporem sunt et parantur assidue."

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 44, lines 171-73: "et insuper his qui rogari consueverunt consilium centum hominum, quod et ab illis appellationem habet; dicitur enim Consilium Rogatorum, residetque in his et Maioris Consilii et totius urbis potestas." The Senate did not officially number one hundred members until 1413, and true power in the regime actually resided in the executive

described the ritual of the Sposalizio to illustrate the nature of the regime. The doge and the members of the Great Council left on special vessels to conduct the rite of union with the sea, while the general populace observed their actions.⁴⁰ Venice had committed the matters requiring greatest trust to her best citizens.

In reporting the apparatus of government, Vergerio saw structures designed to repress dissension and others to spur patriotic sentiments.⁴¹ Much of the description focused upon the legal apparatus, detailing the various courts and their respective jurisdictions. Vergerio claimed that firmness (*constantia*) constituted the greatest public virtue, and the Venetians possessed this virtue. They never mitigated a judicial sentence: criminals condemned to death were executed and exiles were never allowed to return. In the most sensitive matters, the Venetians created special councils that worked efficiently to assure state security. The Chief Ministers (*Savii Grandi*) replaced the Senate when matters dictated secret or lengthy deliberations. Acting as an internal secret police, the Council of Ten (*Dieci*) investigated the crimes of lese majesty and conspiracy, and its judgments allowed no appeal. When describing the function of the *Cinque alla Pace*, Vergerio emphasized their power to mete out rapid justice by imposing fines for factional brawling. Apparently, he was aware of the custom which granted that magistracy the power to exonerate or impose a symbolic fine upon anyone who had killed an outlaw.⁴²

councils above the Senate. However, Vergerio correctly attributed greater power to the Senate than to the Great Council. On the matter of Vergerio's mistakes, see the comments of Robey in his introduction to the edition, 22.

⁴⁰ PPV, *De republica veneta*, Robey and Law, eds., 44, lines 163–68: “soletque quot annis in Ascensione Domini, qui dies unus est eis omnium ex toto anno maxime celebris, Dux eorum cum optimatibus atque omni nobilitate navigio in id ipsum opus comparato, foras portum aliquantisper evectus, in signum domini, continuandaeque possessionis gratia, anulum manu detractum in altum iacere.” Vergerio also praised the torturous path that eventually led one to become a procurator of San Marco and perhaps even the doge. That path appropriately involved a long period of testing to assure that a candidate was endowed with sufficient political prestige (*auctoritas*).

⁴¹ See, e.g., *ibid.*, 41, lines 76–82, where Vergerio identified two foci within the urban fabric. The Rialto functioned as the center of commercial activity. Venice generated her wealth through the involvement of her patricians in urban trading. The Piazza San Marco functioned as the stage for her political affairs. The Ducal Palace served as the city's citadel, the center of governmental coercion. Given the patriciate's success in controlling the citizenry, they could stroll through the piazza on holidays without fear of violent crime.

⁴² On the *Cinque alla Pace*, see PPV, *De republica veneta*, Robey and Law, eds., 45, lines 185–88; Gaetano Cozzi, “Authority and the Law in Renaissance Venice,” in J. R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 294, 318–19; Gaeta, “Storiografia,” 8 n. 16; and Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in*

Other constitutional measures were designed to foster support for the state rather than to punish criminal behavior. Chancery jobs were open to the select group of "original citizens" who were not members of the Great Council. The original citizens also had limited access to participation in the religious confraternities. Vergerio noted that only a fixed number might join any particular Scuola, however, lest it become a source of revolutionary agitation. In Vergerio's estimation, the regime wisely took care to eliminate potential sources of mass unrest: grain administrators assured sufficient food supplies while other magistrates guaranteed necessary services like collecting garbage and maintaining the navigability of canals. The judges of the citizens' formal petitions were appointed after a lengthy selection process and then given the widest latitude in judgment. Vergerio also noted the demagogic action of the regime in persecuting Jews for their usurious practices. Above all, the regime sought to foster the principal pursuit of all Venetians—commercial activity.

Vergerio mentioned several ways in which the regime worked to protect the Venetian economy. By the end of the fourteenth century, Vergerio observed, the government had limited access to investment in the public debt to Venetian citizens or those with a special indult. Enormous debts from the War of Chioggia (1378–1381) and the tax exemption granted to those who invested in the debt after the war had driven Venice dangerously close to financial collapse. The government could only afford to make the twenty annual interest payments without touching the principal of the loans. Venice's rulers therefore devised policies to avoid falling into severe debt once again.⁴³ Foreigners who wished to trade in Venice had to work through a Venetian middleman. Private investors were forbidden to arm ships. They had to use the protection offered by the state-sponsored fleets. The government had also created *soprapraconsoli* (*suprapraconsules*) who handled the cases of debtors who had fled the city. Vergerio saw the measure as a response to the inherent risks that capitalist commerce posed to investors and merchants. Merchants

Renaissance Venice, Studies in the History of Sexuality 1 (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 4–5, 43.

⁴³ PPV, *De republica veneta*, Robey and Law, eds., 46, lines 230–37: "Multis etenim gravibusque bellis, quae longis retro temporibus aut intulit, aut passa est civitas, paene innumerable aes alienum contraxit. Iussis civibus singulo bello pro modo facultatum mutuum in aerarium conferre, pro illis nunc annuas mercedes vicenas exsolvit manente sorte, eaque impensa grandem complectitur summam, habenturque hi redditus immobilium loco. Itaque non nisi civibus, aut si quibus privilegio indultum est, licet emere aut possidere."

faced the unpredictable dangers of the sea, where storms and piracy could quickly wipe out one's capital. Investors could easily hide liquid resources and fraudulently claim that they could not repay their debts. The Venetian magistrates had the right to condemn to permanent exile, even *in contumacia*, those found guilty of fraud.⁴⁴

Despite errors on specific details, Vergerio demonstrated genuine insight into those factors that contributed to the stability of Venice's republican regime.⁴⁵ Venetian political society assumed a more hierarchical and bureaucratic form after the War of Chioggia. The debts of that war stretched Venetian public financing to the limits. Vergerio displayed an especially keen eye when he directed his attention to the physical character of the city. In fact, his proven interest in writing descriptions of cities, as well as his desire to work for Venice's government, supply the most plausible motives for his notes. Piazza San Marco and the Rialto comprised the two central topographical features, the Arsenal remained the mainstay of Venice's seaborne economy, and the Sposalizio her most dramatic public ritual. Vergerio realized the problems caused by the silt which periodically blocked the city's port outlets. Though the Venetians had expended much money in search of a solution, they still had not resolved the problem.⁴⁶ Finally, Vergerio offered unsolicited advice to the Venetian regime on the appropriate policy toward the Italian mainland. He claimed that the Venetians would be much wiser to protect the empire already acquired along the shores of the Adriatic rather than to expand into the Italian hinterland. Any attempt to expand on the *terra firma* would cause government expenses to grow well beyond its revenues.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., 49, lines 310-27.

⁴⁵ See Stanley Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment and the Trecento Venetian State," in Lauro Martines, ed., *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200-1500*, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Contributions 5 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1972), 218-27; Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1980), 109-24; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 119-34; Giorgio Bellavitis and Giandomenico Romanelli, *Venezia, Le città nella storia d'Italia* (Bari: Laterza, 1985), 53-66; Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, 86, 92, 127; and Dennis Romano, *Patricians and "Popolani": The Social Foundations of the Venetian Renaissance State* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 6-9, 141-58.

⁴⁶ PPV, *De republica veneta*, Robey and Law, eds., 21 and 42, lines 105-14. Robey judiciously comments on Vergerio's motives for writing the treatise, *ibid.*, 31-32. In the course of his career, Vergerio had begun to write descriptions of the cities of Capodistria, Rome, and Florence.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 43, lines 143-46 and 44, lines 162-63 (regarding the maintenance of the present empire). See also the letter to Lucio in 1395, *Epist.*, 102-5. Despite discouraging a landed em-

From the letter on behalf of Cicero to the treatise on Venice, Vergerio had consistently defended the model of oligarchic government. From an ideological perspective, he had shown the pragmatism of an unemployed intellectual, willing to work for a prince or a republic and eager to show his appreciation for both systems. He saw his potential contribution as a humanist in using praise or censure to foster a spirit of common good among the political elite. Any degeneration toward factionalism or a demagogic politics designed to enhance the ambitions of a tyrant must be opposed, even at the risk of one's life. Vergerio recognized that ethos had provided Roman orators with a powerful weapon. He hoped to wield it in order to foster a sense of merit within the political elite. Once the elite had consolidated their hold on power, they should assign political tasks on the basis of ability. Vergerio, however, had still not succeeded in proving his own worth to potential employers. He had not obtained the patronage of the Carrara or a post in the Venetian chancery. When war erupted in the spring of 1397, Vergerio at last determined to leave Padua.

pire, Vergerio supplied unwitting justification for it, when he theorized that the word *Venetia* derived from the Roman "Regio Venetiae," which had once extended as far as Bergamo; see PPV, *De republica veneta*, Robey and Law, eds., 39, lines 18–21.

CHAPTER 5

The Power of the Visible

Anticipating a difficult confrontation with the army of Giangaleazzo Visconti, his opponents had sought to strengthen their position. In September of 1396, Florence enlisted the support of King Charles VI of France. Subsequently, Francesco Novello sealed marriage alliances with the rulers of other buffer states in northeastern Italy. His daughter Gigliola da Carrara married Niccolò III d'Este of Ferrara in June of 1397. One month later, Francesco's son, Francesco III, married Alda Gonzaga, daughter of the marchese of Mantua. The weddings occurred as Giangaleazzo's troops advanced steadily against Francesco Gonzaga. After diverting the Mincio River from its normal course, Giangaleazzo's army captured Borgoforte on 15 July 1397. Under the command of Carlo Malatesta from Rimini, the forces of the anti-Visconti coalition rallied to stop that advance.

On 28 August 1397, those forces defeated the Visconti army at the battle of Governolo sul Po, approximately eleven miles south of Mantua. Ultimate victory came only with Venetian assistance. By May of 1398, Venice engineered a truce with Milan, which assured the safety of Padua, Ferrara, and Mantua. For the time being, those buffer states separated Milan and Venice. However, Venice increasingly dictated their foreign policy.¹ After the victory at Governolo, Carlo Malatesta led his

¹ Gatari, *Cronaca carrarese*, *RIS*, n.s., 16.1:439, 448, 453-55; Philip J. Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974), 112-15; and M. Chiara Ganguzza Billanovich, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Novello," *DBI* 20:658. Governolo is a hamlet within the Commune of Roncoferraro and is located on the Mincio River a little over a mile from the Mincio's confluence with the Po River.

army to Mantua, where he received the accolades of the city he had saved. In September of 1397, while residing in Bologna, Pierpaolo Vergerio received terse word of a shocking action on the part of the alliance's military commander. "After Carlo Malatesta had defeated the enemy and driven them off in flight, in order that he might also enjoy victory over the poets, to whom he is most hostile, he overturned the statue, which had stood for many centuries as a memorial to Virgil."²

The episode involving Virgil's statue is a somewhat puzzling chapter in the history of Italian humanism. Three letters preserve the reactions of contemporary scholars to the act and its implications. Vergerio wrote the first letter, which bears a date of 18 September 1397. He addressed it to Ludovico degli Alidosi. Alidosi was papal vicar of the city of Imola in the Romagna, in which capacity he functioned as *de facto* despot. In Vergerio's mind, he was also a potential patron, "unique among princes because he alone cherishes the erudite and particularly the orators and poets."³ The second letter is dated 25 October 1397 but offers no certain evidence of the identity of its author or recipient. Most manuscripts preserve a text addressed to a "Personus," who is once called "Peregrinus." No individual has been found who fits the description, and the use of *Personus* has led to sound suspicions that the letter may be an exercise in composition. Though the letter has been attributed to Leonardo Bruni or even to Vergerio, the best evidence militates against both of those attributions.⁴ Six months later (23 April 1398), Coluccio Salutati wrote to Pellegrino Zambecari to give his reaction to news of the destruction of the statue and to offer some personal advice to his friend.⁵ The two men were chancellors of Florence and Bologna respectively, and, as such, key actors in the anti-Visconti alliance. The delicate character of the situation, in which the alliance's military commander had issued a controversial order, may explain why Salutati cautiously de-

² *Epist.*, 195: "Karolus de Malatestis, victis fugatisque apud Mantuam hostibus, ut de poetis quoque triumpharet, quibus est hostis infestissimus, statuam, quae in honorem Virgilii multis retro saeculis steterat, evertit."

³ *Epist.*, 189–202. I am aware of forty-three manuscripts which contain the invective (*Ep.* 81 in Smith's edition). Full data are supplied in the finding-list of Vergerio's works forthcoming in my edition of the Jerome panegyrics for MRTS.

⁴ David Robey, "Virgil's Statue at Mantua and the Defence of Poetry: An Unpublished Letter of 1397," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 9 (1969): 183–89.

⁵ Coluccio Salutati, *Epistolario*, Francesco Novati, ed. (Rome, 1891–1911), 3:285–308. Ronald Witt supplies an English translation in Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt, *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 94–114.

layed taking a public stance. Most scholars today do not question the historicity of the episode.⁶

Vergerio reacted well before the other intellectuals, and his invective became one of the most popular letters that he ever wrote. It served as a manifesto for his maturing convictions about the value of humanist studies. As such, it has a distinctly original message. Unlike the other two authors, Vergerio did not defend poetry alone. Rather, right from the opening lines of his invective, he defended the value of poetry *and oratory*.⁷ That is, Vergerio offered a comprehensive defense of humanist studies after a renowned political figure had shown contempt for those studies. Among active humanists, only Vergerio conceived of the problem in terms of rhetorical culture.

In form and in content, the letter reveals the development of Vergerio's approach to humanist studies. He composed the letter as a prosecutorial speech, bringing Carlo Malatesta before the tribunal of learned opinion. In a letter one year earlier, Vergerio had lamented the absence of oratory in the contemporary judicial process. Legal procedures were dominated by affidavits taken by notaries to which were appended lists of relevant statutes. The study and practice of law lacked a proper basis in rhetoric. Vergerio subordinated the technical aspects of the trial to the composition of an oration.⁸ Lawyers in antiquity had received train-

⁶ Georg Voigt challenged the historicity of the incident in *Die Wiederbelebung des klassischen Alterthums, oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus*, 3d ed. prepared by Max Lehnerdt (Berlin, 1893), 1:572-75. Historians who accept the historicity of the episode include Francesco Novati, *Epistolario di Salutati*, 3:285-87 n. 1; Vladimiro Zabughin, *Virgilio nel Rinascimento italiano da Dante a Torquato Tasso: Fortuna, studi, imitazioni, traduzioni e parodie, iconografia* (Bologna, 1921-23), 1:112-13; Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, 189-90 n. 1; Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati*, Medioevo e umanesimo 4 (Padua: Antenore, 1963), 55-58; Jones, *Malatesta of Rimini*, 128-29; and Robey, "Virgil's Statue," 183. The most recent discussion of the episode emphasizes the defense of poetry; see Alan Fisher, "Three Meditations on the Destruction of Vergil's Statue: The Early Humanist Theory of Poetry," *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (1987): 607-35.

⁷ *Epist.*, 189 ("cum omnis generis eruditos tum maxime oratores et poetas colis"), 193 ("at vero indixisse bellum vatibus, oratoribus maledicere, damnare scriptores"), 197-98 ("haec est de poetis et de oratoribus sententia. Non est mihi animus nunc mon-/strare, quae sit poeticae vis aut oratoriae facultas"), and 202 ("poetas oratoresque, si non dicit honore dignos, at saltem non insectetur infamia"). As early as 1395, Vergerio used the expression *orator et poeta* to describe a humanist (*Epist.*, 143). The terminology was common until the word *humanista* was coined later in the Quattrocento. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, Michael Mooney, ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979), 97-98, 242-43, 251; and John M. McManamon, *Funeral Oratory and the Cultural Ideals of Italian Humanism* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), 135-36. Nicholas Mann and George Holmes kindly reminded me of Petrarch's affirmation that "orators and poets are not to be found outside of Italy" (*Sen.* 9.1).

⁸ *Epist.*, 179: "Sed hic mos apud nostros plane iam in desuetudinem concessit quando

ing in stasis theory, through which the various issues that might be contested in any trial were grouped under general headings of deed, motive, and jurisdiction of the court. Vergerio therefore divided his letter into treatment of the deed (*de facto*) and the motive behind it (*de causa*). He attempted to establish that Carlo Malatesta had ordered the statue knocked from its pedestal and that he had acted out of false piety.⁹ In form, the letter displays the originality of Vergerio's humanism. He knew the rhetorical techniques of antiquity, and he found ways to employ them in an oratorical context. The content of the letter is as original as the form. Not satisfied with a simple defense of poetry, Vergerio argued for the value of the entire humanist enterprise. He applauded ancient authors who had conserved the great deeds of their era in written records: those writings comprised a collective memory of antiquity. Vergerio proceeded to list the names of Greek and Roman heroes, whom he knew thanks to the work of ancient poets and historians. Consistent with his political ideals, Vergerio closed the list with the champions of the Roman Republic.¹⁰

Nowhere is Vergerio's comprehensive purpose more evident than in his combined defense of Cicero together with Virgil.¹¹ Vergerio first mentioned Cicero when he speculated that Malatesta may have taken indirect inspiration from the emperor Augustus. While Augustus had hated Cicero when the orator was still alive, Malatesta had erupted in hatred for Virgil well after the poet's death. It was fortunate for Cicero that none of the statues erected to honor him in ancient times were standing late in the fourteenth century. Further into the letter, Vergerio quoted the *condottiere* as contemptuously remarking that Virgil was nothing more than a stage actor (*histrion*) and Cicero a shyster (*causidicus*) and jester (*nugator*). Vergerio turned the charges against Cicero against Malatesta himself. He argued that Cicero could fairly be characterized as a lawyer and a humorist, without the pejorative connotations of Malatesta's terminology. With proven integrity, Cicero had prosecuted or defended a number of important citizens. In his spare time he had

causas agitent, a quibus alienissima est orandi facultas. Conscriptis namque tabellis, et conquisitis, ut quisque potuit, legibus, non orationibus, controversiae in foro diiudicantur."

⁹ Ibid., 196. On stasis theory in antiquity, see George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980), 88, 92-95.

¹⁰ *Epist.*, 192-93.

¹¹ Ibid., 194-95, 198-99.

collected a volume of humorous anecdotes. Vergerio placed those specific activities within the context of Cicero's fundamental commitments. The Roman orator had distinguished himself as a moral philosopher and as a civic activist. Neither of the other two letters alluded to Malatesta's condemning Cicero as well as Virgil. By defending Cicero, Vergerio gave expression to some of his deepest convictions. In wrestling with the legacy of Petrarch, Vergerio had realized that he could never be satisfied with a purely poetic style of humanism. He wished to recover the political dimension of the rhetorical culture of antiquity, defined by the activities of the orator. For Vergerio, humanists could be orators and poets, but they had to be orators.

Vergerio's letter reflects in a second way the peculiar evolution of his commitment to humanist studies. It restates his belief in the power of images to persuade human beings. Among the three authors who responded to Malatesta's action, only Vergerio emphasized the importance of the statue as a visible memorial. During his years in Padua, Vergerio had already manifested a sense of the political message that buildings and rituals in a city might convey. He envisioned the layout of a city as though it were the outline of an oration: it needed embellishment. Virgil made Mantua famous and not vice versa. The city had appropriately erected his statue to remind citizens of their illustrious ancestor and to spur them to great accomplishments.¹²

In discussing the importance of monuments, Vergerio ridiculed the purportedly pious motives which had inspired Carlo Malatesta to tear down the statue. Malatesta claimed that it was right to erect statues to the saints but not to pagan poets. Vergerio conceded the suitability of monuments to the saints, provided that by saints one meant individuals of proven ethos (*meritum vitae virtutumque doctrina*). Vergerio reminded his readers that images of illustrious men had motivated ancient heroes like Scipio to perform great deeds. He categorically rejected the proposition that poets, especially the pagan poets, did not deserve such monuments. Illustrious poets and gifted visual artists like the sculptor Phidias deserved such memorialization.¹³ To eliminate the pagans a priori seemed to Vergerio a further mani-

¹² Ibid., 195-96; and Fisher, "Three Meditations," 623-27. See further Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (2d ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 18-20, 40-41, 55-58, 64-66, 103; and Margaret L. King, *The Death of the Child Valerio Marcello* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), 13-14.

¹³ *Epist.*, 196: "Non sum qui negem et statuas et honorem sanctis deberi, qui merito vitae virtutumque doctrina sunt digni ut celebrentur in terris et in caelis beatam sempiter-

festation of the religious bigotry that had erupted in the last years of the fourteenth century. Bands of fanatical Christians had damaged frescoes because they depicted Jews and Roman soldiers participating in the events that ended in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Malatesta's reactionary zealotry threatened to unleash a wave of iconoclasm against the monuments of pagan antiquity and a priceless portion of the cultural patrimony of Christianity. "Therefore, representations of Pharaoh and Pilate and Herod, and likewise those of evil demons which possess a measure of dreadfulness proportionate to the intention of their painters, will have to be removed from churches and ripped off their walls. Consequently, the city of Rome, where there are so many monuments from antiquity and from primitive Christianity, will experience great destruction."¹⁴ Vergerio juxtaposed the intolerant bigotry of Malatesta the Catholic to the tolerant eclecticism of Cicero the pagan. He hammered home his point by sarcastically observing that one could justify such conduct if perhaps one found that a life bent on tearing down helped to build up human society. Vergerio preferred a committed life of faith, which sought to build by living virtuously.

namque vitam agant; poetis vero hisque illustribus non video cur constitui non possint. Si enim munus tale in eorum memoriam fieri solet, qui illustres et in vita praestantes fuerint, quid vetat ne vatibus quoque, si qui praeter ceteros insignes sint, talium rerum monumenta debeantur? Nam et posteris, cum haec vident, magna sunt incitamenta animorum, ingeniisque ad virtutem et vitae gloriam ingens calcar ex his additur; quale solebat dicere Scipio, cum illustrium virorum imagines cerneret, magnopere se ad eorum imitationem concitari. Cumque hoc poetis suo quasi iure concedam, non interdico tamen ceteris, qui aliquo recto studio aut egregio artificio insignes fuerunt; neque enim, ut alios sileam, redarguendus is mihi videtur, qui, cum Palladem finxisset, in eius se aegide medium sculpsit." Vergerio drew the reference to Scipio from Sallust *Iug.* 4.5. Phidias sculpted his portrait on the *Athena Parthenos* (see Smith, *Epist.*, 196 n. 3, who cites Cicero *Tusc.* 1.15.34 and Valerius Maximus *Fact. et dict. mem.* 8.14.ext.6). See also David Robey, "Aspetti dell'umanesimo vergeriano," in Vitore Branca and Sante Gracioti, eds., *L'umanesimo in Istria*, Civiltà veneziana: Studi 38 (Florence: Olschki, 1983), 13-14.

¹⁴ *Epist.*, 197: "Illud vero praeterire non possum, quod Virgilius, quia gentilis fuerit, indignus sit statua; simileque hoc mihi videtur eorum rationi, qui, cum in templis Iudaeorum gentiliumque imagines vident Christum aut verberantium aut crucifigentium, oculos illis, ut quaeque irator videtur, eruunt, truculentasque lictorum facies ex multa religione pietateque deformant, quasi quidem in delendis imaginibus ac non magis in tollendis peccatis componendisque virtutibus meritum vitae consistat. Iam ergo et Pharaonis imagines et Pilati atque Herodis, itemque malorum demonum, quas tam horribiles quam pictoribus placet cernimus, templis avellendae parietibusque delendae erunt; Roma magnam ruinam sentiat oportet, in qua sunt tot vetustatis, tot priscae religionis monumenta." Cf. Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350-1450*, Oxford-Warburg Studies 6 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 41-43; and Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution during the Florentine Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), 91-92.

Vergerio cited examples from antiquity to show the importance of images and the use made of them by civic rulers. When a society wished to dramatize its censure of an individual's immoral behavior, it might properly resort to the destruction of images. The Romans had justly shattered statues of Domitian and deleted his name from inscriptions because the man had proven himself a savage beast. Likewise, Vergerio's contemporaries tried to wipe away any visible trace of the existence of executed criminals. However, Carlo Malatesta could not justify such censure in the case of Virgil, for Virgil had lived a moral life.¹⁵ Vergerio also warned Malatesta of the potentially self-defeating character of his deed. He reminded the condottiere of the anonymous ancient ruler who had sought to become famous by destroying the temple of Diana at Ephesus. No better testimony existed for that ruler's stupidity than the fact that no one remembered his name but all remembered his infamous deed.¹⁶

Carlo Malatesta's quest for fame had led him to attack the group of scholars who might make him famous.

It is one thing to have ignored writers, given that many [princes] are endowed with a lofty spirit, and thus disdain praises and fame, satisfying themselves with the consciousness of great accomplishments. It is altogether another thing to have declared war on the poets, to censure the orators, to condemn the writers. If someone from the common crowd were of this opinion, I would endure it; however, in a prince trained in the good arts, to whom glory and virtue are of value, I cannot approve those things.¹⁷

Vergerio meant to teach Ludovico degli Alidosi the proper conduct for a prince by censuring the conduct of Malatesta. He hoped that Ludovico would show his appreciation for the orators and poets through generous patronage.

Vergerio's defense of Virgil and his poetry are more traditional. He

¹⁵ *Epist.*, 193-94.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 191-92.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 193: "Et est fortasse aliquid neglexisse scriptores, ut sunt plerique tam magno elatoque animo praediti, qui laudes famamque con[con]temnant, bene gestarum rerum conscientia sola contenti; at vero indixisse bellum vaticibus, oratoribus maledicere, damnare scriptores, si quis ex vulgo haec ita sentiret, paterer quidem, quasi illi cum laude et litteris nihil commune sit; in principe vero bonis artibus imbuto, cui sit gloria et virtus in pretio, non possum ista probare."

rejected the charge made by Carlo Malatesta that poets were nothing more than actors. Vergerio found the claim rather ironic from a prince who maintained a troupe of entertainers at his court. Carlo wasted his money in supporting clowns. Other princes, ancient and modern, had had the good sense to patronize poets. Vergerio assembled a list of the enlightened modern princes who had supported Petrarch during his career and included among them Carlo's relative, Pandolfo Malatesta. Vergerio further rejected any effort by Carlo to justify his action by appeal to the teaching of Plato. Plato's ban on poets had extended only to those comic poets who produced obscene works. He did not have in mind the heroic poets who celebrated virtue and censured vice.¹⁸

The other two authors restricted their defense to Carlo's charges against the poets. The anonymous letter on the episode first dealt with Carlo's characterization of the poets as actors. That charge was not true by definition: according to Boccaccio, the source for much of the author's argument, poets are divinely inspired. Lest there be further doubt, one need only note the difference in terms of what the poets produce (*effectus*) and in terms of their lives. Unlike actors, poets supply moral examples and stimulate creative thinking by hiding truth beneath a veil of poetic imagery. Poets like Petrarch lived an upstanding life. Malatesta had no right to ban them from the commonwealth, though many poets freely chose a life of solitude far from the distractions of the city.¹⁹ The anonymous author also dealt with the claim that the poets lied. He attributed that position to Malatesta as well and used his defense to attack the literalism of interpreters, who treated myths as though they were historical accounts. Liars seek to deceive; poets seek to encourage the search for a hidden truth. The Apocalypse of Saint John recounted occurrences that were incredible in order to teach a deeper theological truth.²⁰

Salutati's letter differs from the other two in its subtlety and its broader concerns, which go beyond the affair of the statue. Because Salutati claimed to know of the statue's destruction only from Pellegrino Zambecari's report, he discussed whether the news seemed credible. Salutati also took up the matter of a romantic relationship from which Zambecari sought to extricate himself. Ingeniously, the Florentine

¹⁸ Ibid., 199–202.

¹⁹ Robey, "Virgil's Statue," 192–99.

²⁰ Ibid., 199–202.

chancellor managed to weave the two disparate threads together. In discussing the destruction of the statue, he framed his remarks with the observation that he could not believe that Carlo Malatesta was capable of such an act. For Salutati, it was unthinkable that a prince so devoted to the study of divine letters would destroy a statue of Virgil.²¹ In much the same fashion as Vergerio, Salutati wished to undermine any religious justification for the deed. A believer who appreciated the message of Scripture would not destroy a statue of Virgil.

If Malatesta argued that poets are really actors, Salutati wondered on what basis he could make such a comparison. It could certainly not be in terms of gestures, of which the poets made no use. Perhaps it had to do with the strong element of praise in both of their activities. Salutati claimed, however, that praise did not distort the truth. If it was accorded to deserving individuals, then it proved to be useful in rewarding moral behavior. If it was exaggerated beyond an individual's genuine worth, then one should recognize the hyperbole as a call to reform. Undue praise put the subject in a negative light and thereby constituted subtle criticism. Salutati had opened his missive with effusive praise for Carlo Malatesta and now provided the prince with a hermeneutical key. Finally, no one could doubt the value of poetry, especially for a believer. The greatest Christian authors had cited poetic works, and a Christian classic such as Augustine's *City of God* was incomprehensible without a knowledge of ancient poetry.

Like the anonymous author, Salutati also dealt with the charge that poets lie. As the anonymous author had done, Salutati pointed to the symbolic material in Scripture to defend the use of symbolism in poetry. Metaphoric verse challenged the reader to dig out truths buried in fictions.²² In the second half of his letter, Salutati made recommendations regarding the personal problems which Pellegrino had shared with him. First of all, Zambeccari had anxieties about an affair he was carrying on with a woman named Giovanna. Secondly, the Bolognese chancellor had revealed his desire to leave public life for a life of contemplation in an oratory which he had recently endowed. Zambeccari apparently conceived the flight to a hermitage as a way to end his affair with Giovanna.²³ Salutati tried to strengthen his friend's resolve to break off the

²¹ Coluccio Salutati, *Epistolario*, Novati, ed., 3:285-91, 293-95.

²² *Ibid.*, 3:291-93.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3:295-308.

affair. In presenting his case, Salutati quoted Virgil six different times, re-emphasizing by example the moral tenor of Virgil's poetry. As for the proposed turn to a contemplative life, Salutati challenged Pellegrino's basic reasoning. The contemplative life admittedly brought one closer to God, but one could carry on an active life of service to the Bolognese commonwealth and thereby serve God. The public square should be Pellegrino's hermitage; he would please God by ending his affair and continuing as chancellor.

All three authors, then, rejected Carlo Malatesta's effort to denigrate poets by equating them with actors. Vergerio and Salutati used their letters to defend the appropriate contribution that humanists made to society. Vergerio alone, however, added a defense of Cicero and oratory, and he emphasized the inspirational power of a monument erected to honor a person of integrity. For him and for many intellectuals of the Renaissance, sight comprised the most powerful of human senses.²⁴ Heavenly reward, in fact, consisted of a blessed type of vision. Moreover, Vergerio conceived of the mind as having eyes which a humanist should use to the fullest. "What is more appropriate for a man involved in political activity than to see and commit to memory and review the affairs of a past era?"²⁵ The most convincing truth was a truth that one lived, and the best oratory engendered sights of ethical behavior.

Vergerio's letter on the statue of Virgil suggests a new way to interpret a famous bit of advice which he gave to Ludovico Buzzaccarini in 1396. Vergerio recommended that Buzzaccarini take Cicero as his sole model for persuasive oratory, and, in so doing, he used a comparison to painters of his day. "Although they diligently observe quality paintings executed by others, nevertheless they follow the models of Giotto alone." Modern commentators such as Michael Baxandall have puzzled over that comment.²⁶ Apprentice painters would normally take their

²⁴ See, for example, Vergerio's comments to Salutati in a letter of 1391 (*Epist.*, 62): "Si postremo et id umquam fortuna concederet, quod apud te viverem, cuius monitis et exemplo vitae, cernentibus oculis, cottidie memet maior meliorque fierem! Sentio plane quantum in virtute profecerim, te auctore, per id pauculum temporis quo et videre et audire te licuit, cum ad praecepta tua velut ad abundantissimum fontem sitibundus venirem." Cf. *ibid.*, 15, 82, 88-89, 138; and Eugenio Garin, "Ritratto di Leonardo Bruni Aretino," *Atti e memorie della Accademia Petrarca di lettere, arti e scienze*, n.s., 40 (1970-72): 2-3, who discusses Bruni's decision to pursue humanist studies after seeing a portrait of Petrarch.

²⁵ *Epist.*, 172: "Quid enim magis ad consilia vitae rationesque attinet quam praeteriti temporis et gestarum rerum notitia? Aut quid communi viro magis convenit quam longaevarum aetatis et cernere et memorare et recensere iucunde?"

²⁶ *Epist.*, 177-78; and Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 43-44. For the Ciceronian con-

master as the standard for excellence. Insofar as Vergerio knew the world of Paduan painters, he may have felt that, in questions of style, they esteemed Giotto more than their own master. Or, perhaps influenced by his Florentine connections, Vergerio turned to Giotto when he needed the name of a renowned painter.

How does the letter on the statue affect our understanding of Vergerio's counsel? One must first remember that Vergerio offered his advice in a letter on the principles of rhetorical education useful for one seeking a career in public service. In effect he suggested that humanists must fully appropriate classical standards for oratory if they were to have a radical impact upon the world of politics. Giotto had broken with the conventions of painting in his day and created a new style based upon his understanding of classical norms. Though popular in Padua, Giotto nonetheless remained a controversial figure. He represented the avant garde. By establishing Cicero as the sole model for oratory, Vergerio proposed a radical new approach to education and politics in his day. He sought to reestablish the orator at the center of public life. Vergerio's affirmation represents the first salvo in the Ciceronian controversies of the Renaissance. The full significance of that affirmation emerges only in its historical context. Vergerio was not engaging in a debate about style alone but tracing a position on the social role of a humanist intellectual. He proposed to make Cicero the sole norm for public speechmaking at a moment when no fashionable speaker followed Ciceronian norms. Like the artists of the Trecento, humanists should revolutionize the style and substance of their medium. Through public speeches, they must work to create vivid images of virtue. Vergerio urged humanists to help their world see clearly once again.

The revolutionary endeavors of the humanists of Vergerio's generation appealed to the visual sense. Poggio Bracciolini and Niccolò Niccoli transformed the handwriting and book production of the day. In their view, Gothic script was too difficult to read. They sought to create "a clearer and more legible hand" and adopted strict standards according to what they assumed were exemplars of the handwriting of classical times. At the same time they changed the entire appearance of the book. The

troveries, see Remigio Sabbadini, *Storia del ciceronianismo e di altre questioni letterarie nell'età della rinascenza* (Turin, 1885), 5-18; and John F. D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation*, Studies in Historical and Political Science, ser. 101, no. 1 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983), 123-43.

script, the materials on which they wrote, the way in which they ruled and laid out the page, and the decoration that they added all contributed to a product that in their estimation was more pleasing and more useful.²⁷ Thus, the changes proposed by humanists were dictated by philological and by graphic needs, and they were based upon rigid "classical" norms. In the area of rhetoric, Vergerio imagined himself as an artist who worked through the medium of words to create vivid images of virtue.

Vergerio deepened his conviction about the power of the visible when he visited the city of Rome early in 1398. He accompanied Francesco Zabarella, whom Francesco Novello had sent as an ambassador to discuss matters of mutual concern with Pope Boniface IX (1389–1404). In all likelihood, Zabarella went to dissuade the pope from following the recommendations of the emperor Wenceslaus for ending the Great Western Schism. Wenceslaus had drafted a plan which called for the popes in Rome and Avignon to resign. The emperor had already enlisted the support of King Charles VI of France. Francesco Novello and his allies in the anti-Visconti coalition mistrusted Wenceslaus because he had sold the title of duke to Giangaleazzo Visconti in 1395. Paduan diplomacy worked to have the pope depose Wenceslaus in favor of his rival, Rupert of the Palatinate. While in Rome, Zabarella delivered an oration which argued for the absolute authority of the pope, to whom even the emperor was subject. Vergerio felt that Zabarella was held in high esteem in Rome and would soon receive an ecclesiastical promotion.²⁸

The visit was marked by a progression of discouraging events. Even before reaching the city, Vergerio had a foretaste of things to come.

²⁷ See E. H. Gombrich, "From the Revival of Letters to the Reform of the Arts: Niccolò Niccoli and Filippo Brunelleschi," *The Heritage of Apelles: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1976), 72–78; Albinia de la Mare, *The Handwriting of Italian Humanists* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), 1:49–50, 52–53; de la Mare, "Humanistic Script: The First Ten Years," in Fritz Krafft and Dieter Wuttke, eds., *Das Verhältnis der Humanisten zum Buch*, Kommission für Humanismusforschung, Mitteilung 4 (Boppard: H. Boldt, 1977), 89–93; and esp. de la Mare, "New Research on Humanistic Scribes in Florence," in Annarosa Garzelli, *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento 1440–1525: Un primo censimento*, Inventari e cataloghi toscani 18 (Scandicci [Florence]: La Nuova Italia, 1985), 1:396.

²⁸ *Epist.*, 208: "maiorumque sibi spem effecit." On the embassy, see Smith, *ibid.*, 206–7 n. 1; Terenzio Sartore, "Un discorso inedito di Francesco Zabarella a Bonifacio IX sull'autorità del papa," *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 20 (1966): 375–88; and Gregorio Piaia, "La fondazione filosofica della teoria conciliare in Francesco Zabarella," in Antonino Poppi, ed., *Scienza e filosofia all'Università di Padova nel Quattrocento*, Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova 15 (Padua: Centro per la storia dell'Università, and Trieste: LINT, 1983), 449–52.

When Vergerio's traveling companions thought that they had spotted enemy soldiers approaching, they hastily cast away their cloaks lest they be robbed. Their fears proved groundless, and only Vergerio, who defiantly preferred to be mugged in his cloak, entered Rome fully clothed. The violence of Italian affairs in the late Trecento had created a sort of collective paranoia.²⁹ Furthermore, despite physical comfort and good health, Vergerio found himself increasingly tense during his Roman visit. While returning one Sunday from the station church of Saint Paul's, he and a servant were accosted by a group of the city's magistrates, who approached with their attendants along a street already jammed with carnival revelers. The magistrates compelled the servant to surrender his horse, despite Vergerio's firm protestations of diplomatic immunity. Vergerio only managed to rescue the horse after he had made a round of visits to various authorities. That gave him great relief, for otherwise the horse would have been run ragged in the carnival games.³⁰

The episode confirmed Vergerio's negative impression of Rome. The city, which had bequeathed the code of law to the Western world, had become, in his own words, "the reign of bandits."³¹ Disrespect for the law characterized those who were responsible for upholding it. And the moral demise of the city was reflected in its decrepit physical condition. Vergerio had once started to write a letter in which he promised to describe the topography of Rome and her ancient monuments.³² The existing fragment of that letter betrays the mixed emotions that Rome stirred within him. The city was richly endowed with monuments to the heroes of primitive Christianity; however, the abandoned state of Rome's classical ruins left him feeling forlorn.³³ Vergerio systematically

²⁹ *Epist.*, 209.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 210–11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 205 ("Del mal ladron ora è speloncha e rege") and 229 ("latrones paene intra urbem, qui vitae fortunisque omnium insidientur").

³² *Epist.*, 211–20. The letter also appears in Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti, eds., *Scrittori (secoli XIV–XV)*, vol. 4 of *Codice topografico della città di Roma*, Fonti per la storia d'Italia 91 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1953), 89–100. See further Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, and New York: Humanities Press, 1969), 56–58; Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985), 37–38; and Christine Smith, *Architecture in the Culture of Humanism: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Eloquence 1400–1470* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 174–76.

³³ *Epist.*, 212 ("Mihi vero, gratias Deo, posteaquam huc veni, valitudo corporis integra fuit, quam frugalitate et exercitio confeci, medicamentis optimis et habendae et retinendae sospitatis; verum animo atque ingenio laboro"); and 215 ("Non est igitur ut sim deteriori

listed many of the sites which pilgrims visited in and around the city; his descriptions have a cold, clinical character. That is especially evident in his mention of the tomb of Saint Jerome. "Next to the relic of the Lord's manger Jerome lies buried in the ground." When Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna had seen the tomb of Jerome twenty years earlier, he had shed copious tears. Despite lifelong devotion to Jerome, Vergerio had no such emotional experience in Rome. What Jerome had worked so hard to foster, the interweaving of the classical heritage and Christian belief, was being torn apart before Vergerio's eyes.³⁴

Vergerio uttered a profound lament for the state of classical Rome.³⁵ The former greatness of the ancient city was evident in the massive scale of the remains and the wealth of the materials used to build it. What angered him was the contempt which contemporaries showed for that rich heritage. Vergerio decried the possibility that the common people, out of avarice and ignorance, might destroy all that remained. Painters tore up books and used their folios to sketch cheap souvenirs. The Romans saved themselves the bother of purchasing lime by melting down marble remnants in furnaces scattered among the city's ruins.³⁶ What humanists worked to conserve—the books and monuments of antiquity—the common people destroyed. The Pyramid of Gaius Cestius was so overgrown with vines that its inscriptions were no longer legible. The Testaccio—a mound composed of potsherds dumped from the neighboring warehouses in ancient times and considered by Vergerio to constitute physical proof of Rome's imperial might—annually diminished in size during the pillaging that accompanied the carnival festivities. Roman heroes buried along the Via Appia remained any-

animo, verum ingenio sum tardiore quam soleo . . ."). See also *ibid.*, 210: "cum essem animo mihi ipsi molesto. . ."

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 211–15, esp. 214: "Proxime intra urbem est ecclesia Sanctae Mariae Maioris, miraculose monstrata, ubi iuxta praesaepe Domini Hieronymus humi sepultus iacet." Remigio Sabbadini, *Giovanni da Ravenna insigne figura d'umanista (1343–1408)*, Studi umanistici 1 (Como, 1924), 50–51, 159, esp. 159: "ad busta servorum tuorum Hieronymi et Gregorii, quos summopere semper fueram veneratus, emisi. Numquam fletu maiore genitor carissimum filium aut amicus amicum nequaquam revidendum dimisit, quam ego Hieronymi sepulturam."

³⁵ *Epist.*, 215–20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 216: "Cum enim duo sint quibus extare rerum memoria soleat, libris scilicet atque aedificiis, duabus artibus Romani in eorum excidium perniciemque contendunt: pictorum scilicet, qui, ut sudaria peregrinis effingat, utillimos plerumque et qui in orbe unici sunt libros evertunt; item eorum qui fornaces exercent, qui, ne lapides e longinquo vehant, aedificia destruunt, uti marmor et vivum lapidem convertant in calcem."

mous because later Romans had pilfered the inscriptions and portraits that originally marked their tombs.³⁷

For Vergerio, the ruin of Rome had escalated with disastrous consequences. Lack of appreciation for the city's physical patrimony bred lack of concern for the general quality of life. The city's air was polluted and posed a grave health risk. Moreover, moral decay was rampant in the city. A cavalier attitude toward the visible remains of classical civilization was symptomatic of a deeper malady. Evidence of Christian contempt and bigotry was visible for all to see. Vergerio's text drifted off in mid-sentence; he apparently found the task too painful to complete. The destruction of the statue of Virgil and the destruction of Rome stirred within Vergerio the same loathing. Acting in the name of a misguided piety, whether willfully or by negligence, rulers and the common people were destroying a rich part of the cultural patrimony.

The visit to Rome confirmed Vergerio's notion that a powerful segment of society sought nothing less than the destruction of Roman culture. Ironically, it also opened up for him the possibility that he might find patronage within the Roman church. If Zabarella received a higher ecclesiastical office, Vergerio would readily join his household. Vergerio also curried favor with Cardinal Cosimo Migliorati, and he continued to correspond with him after leaving Rome.³⁸ Vergerio remained impressed by Migliorati's availability to a host of petitioners. Any cardinal who practiced humanity and continence stood out in sharp contrast to the immoral tenor of life in Rome. Such virtue was "a rarity in the city and unique in the Roman curia." Faithful to the rhetorical canons which taught the persuasive power of ethos, Vergerio began to formulate a vision of reform for the church that would have positive effects on society as well.³⁹

Moral decline had become widespread due to the Schism that rival claimants to the papacy had caused. In Vergerio's estimation, the division continued due to moral failings: ambitious prelates received support from malevolent rulers. Only one other schism, that between the Or-

³⁷ Ibid., 218.

³⁸ Ibid., 224-27.

³⁹ Ibid., 228-30, esp. 229: "Quae vox tametsi ad summam laudem tuam pertineat, tamen et conditionem nostrorum temporum notat, cum est in urbe raritas, in curia solitudo, apud omnes inopia, ac nimirum quidem obsidemur undique, finitimos hostes habemus, latrones paene intra urbem, qui vitae fortunisque omnium insidientur." The date and the addressee of the letter are uncertain.

thodox and Roman churches, had lasted so long and produced such calamitous effects. As Orthodox Christians now found themselves reduced to a tiny parcel of territory by the onslaught of Islam, so Latin Christians found themselves plagued by civil wars and threatened by the Turks. The Schism would end, Vergerio argued, when churchmen and their political allies underwent a moral conversion. They must begin to live the values which Christians proclaimed. Otherwise, Vergerio felt certain that the metaphorical destruction of the soul of Christianity through schism would continue to produce physical wounds like the endless wars between England and France.

From 1397 to 1400, Vergerio continued to pursue a demanding program that entailed diverse studies. He apparently completed his law degree in Bologna because the records of the University of Padua described him in May of 1400 as a doctor of civil law (*in iure civili peritus*).⁴⁰ Before returning to Padua, however, Vergerio had also seized the opportunity to study Greek under Manuel Chrysoloras. Chrysoloras had come to Florence in February of 1397, and by October of 1398 Vergerio was searching for housing there.⁴¹ Because Vergerio had joined the group so late in the course, he admitted that he competed hard to catch up with the others.⁴² His success made an impression on his fellow students. Once Leonardo Bruni had realized Vergerio's extensive education, he concealed his insecurities by assuring himself that Vergerio must be older than he. In fact, Vergerio's achievements as a humanist at that point in his career overshadowed the more modest accomplishments of his Florentine confreres. Moreover, his study of Greek after attaining degrees in law and medicine proved his strong inclination to combine humanist studies with his professional endeavors.⁴³

⁴⁰ See *ibid.*, 225, 227, 233; and Smith's comments on 237 n. 1. Bartolomeo da Saliceto had come to Bologna to teach law from 1398 to 1399. From 1400 to 1402, he lectured at Padua; see Annalisa Belloni, *Professori giuristi a Padova nel secolo XV: Profili bio-bibliografici e cattedre*, Ius Commune: Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte 28 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1986), 91, 161–67.

⁴¹ *Epist.*, 227; and Giuseppe Cammelli, *Manuele Crisolora*, vol. 1 of *I dotti bizantini e le origini dell'umanesimo* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1941), 52–57, 110–16.

⁴² *Epist.*, 244–45: “Nam multos ab initio qui convenerant, alios discendi labor deterruit, alios sciendi desperatio, quasi maiore cura et longiore tempore opus esset. Quicquid tamen illud aut quantumcumque est, quod haerere in / tempore admodum brevi potuit, me sortis meae non pudet, nec paenitet studii laborisque causa suscepti. Nam metuens id quod evenit, nos scilicet premature magistro destituendos, simul etiam quia postremus omnium in ea studia veneram, attentius invigilabam magnaue cura insudavi, ut aliquos, qui me praeibant, si possem, attingerem.”

⁴³ See Smith, *Epist.*, 241 n. 2, 242 n. 4; Garin, “Ritratto di Bruni,” 4–5; Hans Baron,

An outbreak of plague forced the suspension of the lessons in 1399, and early the following year Chrysoloras left Florence to meet the emperor Manuel Palaeologus in Pavia. Vergerio departed soon after Chrysoloras. By 30 April 1400, after an absence of almost three years, Vergerio had resettled in Padua, where he continued to study Greek on his own. In his loneliness, Vergerio found the Greek books that he had borrowed to be his only serious academic companionship. He read many works of Plutarch, selections from Thucydides, the *Gorgias* of Plato twice, and the better part of the *Odyssey* with help from the literal Latin translation of Leonzio Pilato.⁴⁴ Perennial problems gave him no respite. His parents suffered from ill health; moreover, the plague struck Bologna in the spring of 1398, Florence the next year, and Padua during the summer of 1400. Although Vergerio continued to nurture a wide variety of contacts, he reaped no career benefit. Frustrated, he lashed out bitterly at the success that sycophants enjoyed in his day. Myopic patrons rewarded their fawning dishonesty.⁴⁵ Driven by penury and

"The Year of Leonardo Bruni's Birth and Methods for Determining the Ages of Humanists Born in the Trecento," *Speculum* 52 (1977): 599–604, 614–25; and Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 6 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1983), 303–10. Remigio Sabbadini suggested that Vergerio may have accompanied Pietro Marcello from Bologna to Florence; see his "Antonio da Romagno e Pietro Marcello," *Nuovo archivio veneto* 30 (1915): 218–19.

⁴⁴ See *Epist.*, 238–42, 244; Agostino Pertusi and Ezio Franceschini, "Un'ignota Odissea latina dell'ultimo Trecento," *Aevum* 33 (1959): 325–27, 351; Pertusi, *Leonzio Pilato fra Petrarca e Boccaccio: Le sue versioni omeriche negli autografi di Venezia e la cultura greca del primo Umanesimo*, *Civiltà veneziana: Studi* 16 (Venice: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1964), 140, 149–50, 522, 531–63, 558–59; and Pertusi, "L'umanesimo greco dalla fine del secolo XIV agli inizi del secolo XVI," in *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, vol. 3 of *Storia della cultura veneta* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1980–81), 177–89.

⁴⁵ *Epist.*, 208, 225–27, 247–48. From Rome, Vergerio corresponded with Ognibene Scola in Padua (*ibid.*, 205–11); Scola may have studied Greek in Florence before he officially entered the court of Francesco Novello in May of 1399. Unlike Roberto Cessi, "Nuove ricerche su Ognibene Scola," *Archivio storico lombardo* 36, fasc. 23 (1909): 95–101, and Cammelli, *Manuele Crisolora*, 67–68, I believe that Scola did study in Florence because Leonardo Bruni described him as a "companion in studies" and addressed him by the Greek form of his name ("Panagathus"); see Francesco Paolo Luiso, *Studi sull'Epistolario di Leonardo Bruni*, Lucia Gualdo Rosa, ed., *Studi storici*, fasc. 122–24 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1980), 18–19. Vergerio also associated himself with an influential group of lawyers at the Carrara court (Ludovico Buzzacarin, his father Arcoano, and his brothers Pataro and Francesco, Antonio da Sant'Angelo, and Pietro Alvarotti [*Epist.*, 209]). He corresponded with Michele da Rabatta, indicating his readiness to serve the influential Carrara courtier at the first invitation (232–34). Zabarella and Vergerio apparently promoted the efforts of Alano Adimari to become bishop of Florence (230–32). Vergerio thanked Giacomo da Treviso for helping him to meet Carlo Zeno, the wealthy Venetian admiral (221–23; and Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986], 50–51). Luigi Pesce has argued that Giacomo probably urged Ver-

fear of the plague, Vergerio had to return home to Capodistria in the summer of 1400. His fortunes had fallen in inverse proportion to his academic training. Toward the end of the year, Vergerio finally had sufficient funds and mettle to return to Padua. At that low point, Francesco Zabarella dedicated to him a treatise entitled *De felicitate*.⁴⁶ As Zabarella noted, happiness was a subject that the two friends often had occasion to discuss. Ever in quest of that elusive goal, Vergerio rededicated himself to impressing the Carrara rulers with his political acumen.

gerio to seek a prebend in the diocese of Treviso in 1398; see his *La chiesa di Treviso nel primo Quattrocento*, Italia sacra: Studi e documenti di storia ecclesiastica 37–39 (Rome: Herder, 1987), 207–9.

⁴⁶ See the colophon to the treatise in Padua, Bibl. del Seminario, cod. 196, 225 (quoted also by Smith, *Epist.*, 367 n. 1: “Hoc opus inscripsit mihi idem dominus Franciscus, vir, ut in iure facile omnium princeps, ita et in ceteris scientia atque eloquentia praeclarissimus, cui dignas agere gratias non satis queo cum ob hoc tum et alia in me beneficia, quae tot extant ut nedum remunerare sed ne renūmerare quidem possim. Petruspaulus Vergerius de Iustinopoli scripsit haec”); Conrad Bischoff, *Studien zu P. P. Vergerio dem Älteren* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1909), 85–88; and Gasparo Zonta, *Francesco Zabarella (1360–1417)* (Padua, 1915), 19–22. The Padua codex is copied from the exemplar made for Vergerio and indicates that Zabarella completed the treatise on 18 October 1400 while at the Benedictine monastery of S. Maria di Praglia in the Euganean hills. To thank Zabarella, Vergerio composed a poem (inc: Omnia iam dudum). The outbreak of the plague at century’s end was especially devastating. According to Sabbadini, “Antonio da Romagno,” 208, Antonio lost a daughter in 1398 and then his wife and five sons between August and September of 1400. On the same occasion, Antonio’s brother lost four sons. Vergerio sent Zabarella’s treatise, *De pestilentia vitanda* (1399), to an acquaintance (Salutati?) in Florence. See *Epist.*, 399–422; and Agostino Sottili, “La questione ciceroniana in una lettera di Francesco Zabarella a Francesco Petrarca (tav. IV),” *Quaderni per la storia dell’Università di Padova* 6 (1973): 34. From 1400 to 1401, Salutati and Zabarella exchanged letters regarding the death of two of Salutati’s sons, and Giovanni Conversini wrote a consolatory work on the death of his son Israele. See George W. McClure, *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), 95–98, 104.

CHAPTER 6

A Humanist Education for Adolescents

Around 1389, Pierpaolo Vergerio had written for the first time to Francesco Novello in search of patronage. In that letter, Vergerio had proposed that a proper course of studies would steer a prince away from hedonism and avarice toward a life of personal continence and civic justice. An education which formed character would enhance the dignity of the ruler and benefit his subjects. In the fall of 1401, Vergerio sketched out a similar route to greatness for Ubertino da Carrara, Francesco's ten-year-old son. He first emphasized that young persons of Ubertino's nobility developed their natural abilities by following moral exemplars. Two distinct but related arts nurtured virtue and engendered glory for the powerful. First, rulers must concern themselves with the discipline of arms, in which the Carrara had traditionally excelled. However, Vergerio sought to broaden their education by introducing a potential new source for praise, the discipline of letters.¹

By early 1403 at the latest, Vergerio had completed a short treatise which expanded upon the basic notions proposed in his letters to the Carrara.² He stated in the preface that he had written two short books

¹ *Epist.*, 31–32, 249–51.

² On the date of the treatise, see Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, 253–54 n. 3; and Giovanni Calò, "Nota vergeriana: Il *De ingenuis moribus* e il supposto precettorato del Vergerio alla corte di Francesco Novello," *Rinascita* 2 (1939): 228–32. Both scholars argue for a date before the defeat of Francesco Novello at the battle of Casalecchio on 26 June 1402. Vergerio's use of Francesco III and Giacomo da Carrara as examples of finely conditioned princes who threw the javelin and swam well may refer to their escape from a Visconti prison after Casa-

"on the liberal studies of adolescents and their morals" (*de liberalibus adulescentiae studiis ac moribus*). As his letters had already suggested, Vergerio posited a close relationship between specific studies and formation of character. Adolescence signaled the arrival of moral responsibility and all of the confusion associated with the maturation process. Vergerio therefore designed a program of liberal studies that would instill a sense of moral development for the adolescent. Scholars have long debated the originality of Vergerio's ideas and the extent to which he was influenced by previous theorists.³ The treatise was the first book that Vergerio published, and it is best characterized as a work of personal synthesis. In it he reformulated ideas about education which had evolved from the time that he had begun to teach at the University of Bologna in 1388.

Vergerio addressed the work to the son of the Carrara prince. Accordingly, the treatise focuses on the life of the aristocracy, particularly in the advice given on training in arms, where a note of Spartan rigor dominates. Yet Vergerio had a broader audience in mind. He argued that education should be the concern not only of the family but of the state. In the final analysis, Vergerio intended his remarks for anyone who had a natural inclination to liberal studies and participated in political life.⁴ Vergerio reiterated some fundamental convictions in the work.

lecchio; see PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Attilio Gnesotto, ed., 141. Eugenio Garin judiciously states that Vergerio wrote the treatise at the beginning of the fifteenth century and may have finished it as early as 1402; see his *L'educazione in Europa (1400-1600): Problemi e programmi* (2d ed. Bari: Laterza, 1966), 114-15, A terminus ante quem is supplied by Naples, Bibl. Nazionale, cod. VIII.C.8. As described by Cesare Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*, Spicilegium bonaventurianum 7-8 (Quaracchi: Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, and Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971), 2:819-21, the colophon (fol. 128) indicates that the treatise was copied at Padua on 12 September 1403. The scribe, Antonius Petri Donadei de Rocca S. Stephani de Aquila, studied canon law at the University of Padua and passed examinations in June of 1408 before a board that included Francesco Zabarella.

³ See Conrad Bischoff, *Studien zu P. P. Vergerio dem Älteren* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1909), 79-85; Smith, *Epist.*, xix-xx; Calò, "Nota vergeriana," 232-35; Giuseppe Saitta, *L'umanesimo*, vol. 1 of *Il pensiero italiano nell'umanesimo e nel rinascimento* (Bologna: C. Zuffi, 1949), 267-73; Garin, *L'educazione in Europa*, 114-19; George Holmes, *The Florentine Enlightenment 1400-50* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 15-16; David Robey, "Humanism and Education in the Early Quattrocento: The *De ingenuis moribus* of P. P. Vergerio," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 42 (1980): 27-58; Robey, "Vittorino da Feltre e Vergerio," in Nella Giannetto, ed., *Vittorino da Feltre e la sua scuola: Umanesimo, pedagogia, arti, Civiltà veneziana*: Saggi 31 (Florence: Olschki, 1981), 242-43, 252-53; Benjamin G. Kohl, "Humanism and Education," in Albert Rabil, Jr., ed., *Humanism and the Disciplines*, vol. 3 of *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 12-13; and Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989), 117-19.

⁴ For the emphasis on princes, see PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 109-11,

When he described freedom, he consistently emphasized one's interior attitude; an individual might still be free in a situation where political structures denied basic liberties. Authentic freedom liberated one from the urges of self-gratification and allowed one to be useful to others. Studies were liberal, then, to the extent that they fostered interior freedom through the formation of character. The formation of character was of special concern once one reached adolescence. With puberty came lust (*libido*). Finally, the educator must artfully combine discipline and tolerance. Students needed to mature in their moral autonomy.

Vergerio's notion of freedom had evolved through his own experience and his understanding of classical ideals. Given his restrictive notions of political participation, Vergerio tended to emphasize the moral dimension of the free person. He reflected upon his own interior freedom and what inhibited that freedom. When human beings succumbed to physical urges, they sacrificed their freedom. To fill one's stomach or acquire riches or satisfy one's lust all comprised enslavement to egoistic impulses. Genuine interior freedom expressed itself in acts of altruism. Vergerio had studied in order that he be "free and good."⁵ He found ready confirmation for his convictions in Cicero's classification of human activities. Because some activities were performed to earn money or to indulge sensual pleasures, Cicero labeled them sordid (*illiberalis*). He rated other activities, which required greater practical intelligence (*prudencia*) and provided social benefits (*utilitas*), as befitting a free person (*liberalis*).⁶

In the treatise, Vergerio offered specific signs of a "free genius" in an adolescent. In general, such youth possessed enthusiasm for praise and burned with a love for glory. Vergerio pardoned adolescents for such motivation because their powers of reason were not sufficiently developed to allow for less egoistic pursuits. Adolescents of free temperament also enjoyed virtuous activity and were malleable enough to accept cor-

132-43 ("de armis"). For the state's responsibility to educate adolescents, see *ibid.*, 106. On the more general audience, see *ibid.*, 99, 101-3, especially the remarks to Ubertino on 99: "ut per te ceteros id aetatis commoneam."

⁵ *Epist.*, 15 (Francesco da Faenza to PPV), 22, 30, 55, 57, 60, 88, and 149.

⁶ Cicero *Off.* 1.42.150-51; and PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 100: "Maxime vero, qui sunt liberale ingenium a natura consecuti, sinendi non sunt aut inerti otio torpere aut illiberalibus implicari negotiis." See also Terence *Ad.* 448-49, 462-64, 886-87, *Eun.* 255-64; Cicero *Flac.* 7.16, 8.18-19; Chaim Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1950), 7-30; and Donald R. Kelley, *The Human Measure: Social Thought in the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), 50.

rection. Though they should fear physical punishment, Vergerio felt it better that they fear disrepute. He allowed for the possibility of using the lash on a student, but he likewise condemned the sadistic excesses of tutors of the day. Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, Vergerio's mentor from Paduan days, claimed in his autobiography to have witnessed one student murdered and others beaten bloody or imprisoned naked within a makeshift prison in the dead of winter. Vergerio sought to inculcate a sense of civility wholly contrary to such cruelty. Genuine liberal genius was incapable of hatred and tended to place the best interpretation on things said or done.⁷

However, every adolescent faced a variety of pressures that militated against his enthusiasm for virtue and fame. Vergerio recognized that liberal studies were unpopular in his day; students preferred studies that would assure them wealth after their education. Hardheaded pragmatism dictated the need for studies more suited to the enterprises of commercial capitalism. In fact, Vergerio claimed that severe objections had been raised concerning the need for liberal studies from ancient times to the present. For Vergerio, Plato's ideal of a wise ruler was the exception that proved the rule. In the matter of what to study, moreover, many adolescents found themselves without a choice. Either they acted from constraint or they were influenced by false notions that they had learned in conversations or through their encounter with prevailing social mores. That left them only two paths to a liberal education: they were attracted to those studies, or they were forced into them. Vergerio used Ubertino to illustrate his point. His pursuit of a liberal education was in part dictated by the wishes of his father and in part reflected the child's own decision. To continue on in those studies, however, would prove Ubertino's free genius.⁸

Vergerio thus discerned two competing sets of values at work in any society. One set reflected a person's selfish instincts. The common lot of humanity foolishly admired people driven by ambition and avarice. They thought such individuals reaped a rich profit. The end of wealth

⁷ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 101-3 ("signa liberalis ingenii"). See also Remigio Sabbadini, *Giovanni da Ravenna insigne figura d'umanista (1343-1408)*, Studi umanistici 1 (Como, 1924), 11; and Grendler, *Schooling*, 35-36.

⁸ *Epist.*, 131-33, where Vergerio cites Cicero *Off.* 1.32.117-18. The same ideas are repeated in *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 112-16. In general, see Robert E. Proctor, "The *studia humanitatis*: Contemporary Scholarship and Renaissance Ideals," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990): 815-16; and James D. Tracy, "From Humanism to the Humanities: A Critique of Grafton and Jardine," *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 131-32.

at times even justified illegal means. The character of Herotes in Vergerio's *Paulus* dramatized in a comic setting the supposed success of unscrupulous entrepreneurs. Extremely clever by nature, Herotes had used his abilities to earn pleasing remuneration. He regularly tasted the prostitutes whom he procured for Paulus in order to assure that they were not poisoned. On the other hand, Vergerio felt that Petrarch had changed his priorities in a positive way. Infatuated with Laura as an adolescent, Petrarch later used his talents for literary and scholarly pursuits. His personal fame as a poet reflected his success in a life committed to studies that were of aid to a broader public. Vergerio contrasted arts that were good and useful to those that were hedonistic, disadvantageous, or, worst of all, harmful.⁹

In the treatise, Vergerio reiterated his fundamental educational conviction. Moral living was an *ars*. It had a set of rules derived from experience that one could communicate to students of genuine ability. Then, through lived experience, they must learn to apply the precepts. Vergerio urged that all education from infancy on be directed toward helping the seeds of virtue grow within the human heart. Moral progress was possible throughout life, and a moral education might benefit students of any level of intelligence. On the other hand, Vergerio emphasized to Ubertino that there was nothing magical about such an education. It had inherent limits imposed by the character of the student whom one trained. An education in the good arts could do no more than mitigate the dementia of the emperor Claudius or the cruelty of Nero. Nevertheless, Vergerio never wavered in his belief that such an education should foster the humane instincts to assist others rather than the drive to gratify oneself.¹⁰

Vergerio purposefully approached Ubertino at an age when he had already begun to train with his father's army and was fast approaching puberty. From the days of the *Paulus*, Vergerio had indicated his aware-

⁹ *Epist.*, 149, 174–75, 181–82; and *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 104: “Quem igitur eum speremus futurum senem, qui sit in adulescentia tenax atque avarus? Non quidem quo permittendae sint eis largitiones, quas exercere cum discretione munerum, personarum meritumque nesciunt, sed corruptae naturae atque illiberalis ingenii sit indicium. Hi igitur aut ad quaestuosas artes faciunt, aut manuale opus, aut negotiationem ad curam rei familiaris, praecipue qui, etsi nobiliores fuerint quandoque artes consecuti, illas tamen semper, ut cetera, ad ignobilem quaestum redigunt; quae quidem res est ab ingenuis mentibus prorsus aliena.”

¹⁰ *Epist.*, 134, 175; and *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 104, 112–13, 116–17. Vergerio cites Cicero *Tusc.* 3.1.2 and may also have found support in Pseudo Plutarch, “De liberis educandis,” 2A–C, 3E–F.

ness of the difficult choices faced by all adolescents. At a moment when their faculty to decide was most immature and their sexual awareness new, adolescents were expected to choose between virtue or vice. Despite a subconscious insight into the ideal of virtue, Paulus had slipped back into his profligate ways. In contrast, Vergerio's life of Petrarch was written to illustrate that the poet had matured beyond his relationship with Laura. To depict the habits of adolescence in his treatise, Vergerio relied heavily upon the treatment of pathos in the second book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Adolescents, on the one hand, displayed a smugness and a readiness to conquer the world. Loathe to admit that they did not know something, they tended rather to lie in order to protect their fragile egos. On the other hand, adolescents were extremely sensitive. They feared dishonor and lacked guile. Along that basic spectrum from exaggerated self-confidence to fragile sensibility, an adolescent typically succumbed to passions without permitting reason a moderating role.¹¹

Above all, Vergerio joined classical thinkers in positing lust (*libido*) as the characteristic vice of adolescence. To counteract that vice, Vergerio made practical recommendations for adolescent education. Dancing and fraternization between the two sexes should be severely restricted. Students should be kept busy throughout the day. Perhaps with an eye on the possibility of masturbation, Vergerio called solitude dangerous for an adolescent. One must also carefully investigate to assure the good reputation of the teacher. Finally, one must be attentive to the companions whom an important student like Ubertino might have. Herotes had led Paulus astray. Already in Vergerio's initial formulation, a classical education for adolescents had overtones of a ritual entry into manhood that became more pronounced in certain regions of Europe in the following centuries.¹²

¹¹ *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 104–6, where Vergerio cites Terence *And.* 60–61.

¹² *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 106–11, where Vergerio cites Aristotle *Rhet.* 2.12.3 and Cicero *Off.* 1.34.122, *Sen.* 11.36. See also Walter J. Ong, "Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite," *Studies in Philology* 56 (1959): 103–24. Vergerio lived in an era that viewed masturbation as morally culpable but fairly normal. Because the practice of sodomy often involved pederasty, it was severely punished. See Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Repression and Change in the Sexual Life of Young People in Medieval and Early Modern Times," in Robert Wheaton and Tamara K. Hareven, eds., *Family and Sexuality in French History* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 30, 40–42; and Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*, *Studies in the History of Sexuality* 1 (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 114–15, 121, 148–51. The problem of the sexual abuse of children by their teachers partially explained why school was held in the public squares of Roman cities; see William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), 237. The Venetians of the fifteenth

As the student developed, the teacher should adjust his material. Vergerio's treatment of the liberal arts in the treatise represents the fruit of his long years in school. He evaluated the disciplines according to two categories: those which supplied enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction (*ad delectationem, iucundum, pulcherrimum*) and those that were useful for activity in society (*utilis, honestum*). One fundamental conviction helped Vergerio to structure learning in stages. Prepubescent boys should study grammar; postpubescent adolescents needed to learn the humanities because they focused upon the formation of character.¹³ Vergerio recognized from his own experience that the study of Latin grammar supplied the foundation for all subsequent learning. In 1395, he had outlined the appropriate topics for the study of grammar: tropes and figures of speech, spelling and syllabification, prosody and prose rhythms, pronunciation and compositional exercises. Together with Francesco Zabarella, Vergerio put together a manual for grammarians, *De arte metrica*. Yet, like many educators, Vergerio had no taste for teaching grammar. In 1396, Vergerio candidly admitted that the constant need to drill grammar students threatened to rot one's brain. His treatise insisted that students not rush on to weightier subjects without attaining facility in Latin grammar, but Vergerio left its teaching to others.¹⁴

The treatise also offers a picture of Vergerio's experience of the university curriculum. Having begun his career as a lecturer in dialectics, Vergerio continued to respect the ways in which the discipline sharpened one's reasoning and helped one to argue to sound conclusions. However, logic lacked a moral purpose.¹⁵ Vergerio remembered that his study of the disciplines of the quadrivium and of science had proven personally engaging. He saw music primarily as a form of recreation, though the investigation of mathematical proportions helped one to

century tried to solve the same problem by limiting the hours during which school might meet; see Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, 138.

¹³ *Epist.*, 131–34, 142 (where Vergerio describes a boy of twelve or thirteen years of age as a *puer*), 276–77. Among classical sources, Vergerio may have drawn upon Pseudo Plutarch, "De liberis educandis," 12A–13C, Seneca *Ep.* 88.20, and Quintilian 1.4.5–6. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 233, challenges the opinion that there were three clear-cut stages in Roman schooling (*ludi magister, grammaticus, rhetor*).

¹⁴ See *Epist.*, 44–45, 157–59; Remo L. Guidi, *Aspetti religiosi nella letteratura del Quattrocento* (Rome and Vicenza: Libreria Internazionale Edizioni Francescane, 1973–83), 4:58–69; and Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 237. The manuscript containing the *De arte metrica*, Venice Marc. lat. XIII.41 (4729), has corrections and additions in the hand of Pietro da Montagnana.

¹⁵ *Epist.*, 42, 85; and *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 123.

gauge the reasons for consonance and dissonance. He frankly liked the certitude of the answers one reached in the mathematical disciplines (arithmetic and geometry). He found that astronomy raised our minds to a more luminous world. Accurate calculations allowed one to predict the conjunction of the stars, chiefly for eclipses of the sun and moon.¹⁶

Together with rhetoric, Vergerio gave most attention in his treatise to natural science. He recapitulated his study of the Aristotelian corpus, moving from the causes and accidents of animate and inanimate objects (*De physico*) to the movements of the planets and their effects on earth (*De caelo et mundo*). What Vergerio particularly enjoyed was the ability of science to explain matters that the masses treated as marvels. That was especially true of phenomena that occurred in the atmosphere around the earth, which acquired the status of portents in the common imagination. Human intelligence was drawn to investigate such unknowns. Vergerio saw medicine as closely conjoined and, in effect, derived from natural science. The study of medicine had appealed to Vergerio. He had hoped that it would prove useful in healing bodily illness. However, Vergerio decried the manner of exercising the discipline as "least liberal."¹⁷

From subsequent remarks and from the premise of his entire treatise, it is fair to infer that he disliked the demand for money and concomitant lack of moral sensibilities among practicing physicians in his day. That realization may explain why one as interested as Vergerio was in scientific investigation ultimately decided not to practice medicine. Though he experienced the fascination of the scientific world, he looked for more from learning than merely the pleasure of discovery. As his own studies progressed, Vergerio increasingly tended to emphasize the importance of moral philosophy. Vergerio saw parallels between natural and moral philosophy. Both delved into areas with uncertainties and un-

¹⁶ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 124–25. In 1391, Vergerio had used a formula to reckon the number of troops involved in the campaign against Giangaleazzo Visconti (*Epist.*, 32). By 1400, however, Vergerio's friends wrote to advise him of a coming eclipse. He admitted that he no longer had time to calculate such matters for himself because his priorities had changed. See *Epist.*, 236; and Tiziana Pesenti, *Professori e promotori di medicina nello Studio di Padova dal 1405 al 1509: Repertorio bio-bibliografico*, Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova 16 (Padua: Centro per la storia dell'Università, and Trieste: LINT, 1984), 30–32.

¹⁷ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 125–26. Vergerio dismissed theology as nothing more than Aristotelian metaphysics which treated ultimate causes and matters that were removed from sense perception (126). See also Robey, "Humanism and Education," 45.

knowns. However, natural philosophy comprised a speculative science, whereas ethics focused upon behavior. And the natural sciences had no need of public speaking. Scientists worked in isolation from the crowds of the public squares.¹⁸

By 1396, Vergerio had formulated a special program of education for those interested in a career in public service. In three letters to Ludovico Buzzaccarini, Vergerio argued for the utility of history, moral philosophy, and rhetoric.¹⁹ History alone had the capacity to conserve the past record of human culture. It supplied a vital source of information and of vivid illustration. Only a sound grounding in moral philosophy directed men away from the insatiable quest for riches. Vergerio preferred to measure men by the quality of their lives. The letter on rhetoric is a watershed for the humanist movement. It is self-consciously avant-garde. When Vergerio advocated that judicial trials be contested through speeches, he thereby argued for the restoration of rhetoric to its traditional social settings. Secondly, he offered Cicero as the sole model for correct oratorical practice. By arguing for Cicero's superiority to Virgil, he suggested that oratory had greater social benefits than poetry. Finally, he specified principles for the formation of the orator, which stressed decorum in matters of style and substance in opposition to unrestrained embellishment. "What could be more insane, given that we communicate to understand and be understood, than to waste our efforts in speaking in such a way that no one could possibly understand us?"²⁰

Historians have rightly noted that Vergerio's curriculum for those seeking a career in public affairs comprised the most creative aspect of the entire treatise. Repeating his previous convictions, Vergerio recommended training in moral philosophy, history, and eloquence.²¹ Moral

¹⁸ *Epist.*, 30, 39, 41-42, 55-56, 62-63, 88-89, esp. 43: "Re quidem sentio quanta iacturae sit eloquentiae studium alteri studio deditis, et nobis maxime qui scientiis mutis insistimus."

¹⁹ *Epist.*, 172-79. For the friendship between Vergerio and Buzzaccarini (ca. 1360-1435), see Gianni Ballistreri, "Buzzaccarini, Ludovico," *DBI* 15:644-45.

²⁰ *Epist.*, 178: "Quid enim potest esse dementius quam, cum ideo sermo et datus et receptus sit ut invicem intelligamur, id scilicet curare dicendo, ne intelligi possumus?" Ronald Witt has demonstrated that Vergerio here adapted ideas of Cicero *Or.* 11.37-13.42; see his "Still the Matter of the Two Giovannis: A Note on Malpaghino and Conversino," forthcoming in *Rinascimento*, n.s., 35 (1995).

²¹ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 121-22. See further Quentin Skinner, *The Renaissance*, vol. 1 of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), 90; Robey, "Humanism and Education," 43-44, 47; John M. McManamon, "Innovation in Early Humanist Rhetoric: The Oratory of Pier Paolo Vergerio the

philosophy was prescriptive, offering principles on proper behavior and on general and specific duties within society. It was the most liberal of all the arts because zeal for integrity produced free individuals. Since history recorded examples of actions and convictions from ages past, it supplied illustrations for the principles of moral philosophy. Vergerio conceded the novelty of including rhetoric within the program and defended its appropriateness by adducing the Roman conviction that eloquence belonged to political culture (*civilis scientia*).²² One mastered the art by acquiring the ability to speak seriously and with appropriate embellishment in order to persuade one's fellow citizens.

He expanded upon his views of rhetoric later in the treatise.²³ He lamented the state of the discipline in his own day. Of the three great opportunities for public speaking in antiquity, only that of celebratory rhetoric had survived. Lawyers no longer gave structured discourses when prosecuting or defending an accused criminal. Princes no longer heard speeches when seeking advice on political decisions, and the general public lacked all sophistication in recognizing authentic eloquence. They simply were satisfied to be entertained. That left only epideictic speeches, and even they were not composed according to the canons of rhetoric established in antiquity. Rhetoric should regain its place as the most important discipline of the trivium and as a key study for all liberal minds engaged in public affairs. Vergerio's defense of rhetoric and its place in a curriculum for political formation redefines the social role of the humanist intellectual.

In the treatise, Vergerio actually analyzed the respective value of a variety of educational curricula. He discussed the value of the disciplines that the Greeks had taught to boys. He evaluated the trivium, the quadrivium, and the professional studies of the universities of his day, calling upon his own lengthy experience. He placed special emphasis on three disciplines that would permit humanists to recover the rhetorical culture of Greco-Roman antiquity. The humanist orator might then reassume his place at the center of public life. In evaluating various programs of education, Vergerio saw positive aspects in all of them. Nevertheless, he did emphasize basic differences among the arts and sciences.

Elder," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 22 (1982): 6; and Benjamin G. Kohl, "The Changing Concept of the *studia humanitatis* in the Early Renaissance," *Renaissance Studies* 6, no. 2 (1992): 194.

²² Cicero *Inv.* 1.5.6, cited by Quintilian 2.15.33. Cf. Cicero *De or.* 1.43.193.

²³ See PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 123-24; and McManamon, "Innovation," 7-9.

Disciplines such as grammar and dialectic had universal application for their preparatory nature. Disciplines such as arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and natural science gave the learner a sense of personal satisfaction upon mastery. Disciplines such as moral philosophy, history, and rhetoric made the student a useful member of society. Vergerio also felt that law might serve a useful purpose, provided that its practitioners did not purvey their expertise to get rich.²⁴ There were disciplines about which Vergerio expressed mixed feelings. Though poetry might improve one's writing ability and assist character development, it still seemed to Vergerio primarily a form of entertainment.²⁵ Vergerio also noted that those elements of "drawing" (*ars designativa, ars protractiva*) which were utilized to write books had great importance in preserving classical learning. Vergerio once digressed in the course of his treatise so that he might lament the loss of so many ancient books. As a remedy, he urged the preparation of a pool of copyists trained in the new canons of handwriting.²⁶

In concluding his analysis, Vergerio emphasized that one need not master all of the aforementioned disciplines to acquire a liberal education. He may have spoken from his own unusually extensive academic experience. Students should construct a curriculum based upon their talents and interests.²⁷ They should also remember that there are links among the disciplines. For example, one with ready wit but poor communication skills might profit by studying prose composition and rhetoric. There were dangers in an inordinate curiosity, which might lead a student to sample too many disciplines or to concentrate exclusively on

²⁴ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 126.

²⁵ Ibid., 14–25. Vergerio admits that music likewise provides entertainment, but its harmonies might moderate the soul's wantonness (*lascivia*).

²⁶ See PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 122–23 (on drawing); Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350–1450*, Oxford-Warburg Studies 6 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 125; and Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (2d ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 139–41. Vergerio felt that the Greeks valued drawing for typically pragmatic reasons. Given that the Greeks liked to purchase painted vases, pictures, and statues, training in drafting helped one to recognize artistic quality at a fair price. Applying Vergerio's fundamental categories, drafting among the Greeks was useful (*utilis*) and respectable (*honesta*). In the early fifteenth century, however, drafting had lost much worth because those skills were left almost exclusively to painters, who practiced a mechanical art. In the digression, Vergerio rated books superior to the visual arts of painting and sculpture. While visual representations captured the exterior or aspect of a person or situation at a fixed point in time, books could record the character of an individual or of a society as it developed over time (119–21).

²⁷ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 126–28.

one. As always, Vergerio urged a student not to structure his educational program in an effort to gain wealth.

Vergerio's open approach to organizing a curriculum reflects a basic quality of the entire treatise. As David Robey has observed, Vergerio balanced any rigor in his educational recommendations with a sense of tolerance toward the maturing student. He had imbibed the revolutionary spirit of the comedy of Terence early in his career and carried it over into his treatise on liberal education. He admitted that the signs he offered for spotting a "liberal genius" were by no means infallible. Nature herself tended to hide succulent fruits under a prickly skin. After affirming that lust (*libido*) was the characteristic vice of adolescence, he cautioned that one could not therefore conclude that all adolescents were guilty of practicing the vice. He wished to alert parents and teachers to a tendency. Even children with learning impairments might profit from an education focused upon the formation of character. One should offer them subjects in which they showed the greatest promise of success. Although Vergerio took special interest in the value of "letters" (*litterae*) for one dedicated to public service, he thought reading and writing valuable for the contemplative life as well. Letters supplied a universal therapy for the problems of laziness or anxiety.²⁸

Vergerio's tolerant approach did not mean that he was inattentive to detail. In fact, he paid close attention to the overall environment in which the educator worked. In the *Paulus*, he had satirized the excessive license enjoyed by university students from wealthy families. His conversations at Padua with Giovanni Conversini confirmed his notion of the dangers of student revelry. Early in his life, Giovanni had sold his property and then set out to enjoy himself. He was a welcome guest at student parties, given his ability to compose bawdy lyrics for his music. Vergerio himself knew the ways in which Paduan students preyed upon unsuspecting citizens, whom they robbed of their money.²⁹ Thus, Vergerio recommended that the education of adolescents take place away from the family home and the city of origin, and he preferred the situation of a boarding school where all organizational aspects fell under the control of the master. Vergerio outlined a day that was equally divided between study, eating and relaxation, and sleep. Adolescents needed a

²⁸ Ibid., 102 (cf. *Epist.*, 89), 107, 113, 117–21; and Robey, "Humanism and Education," 29–37.

²⁹ See Sabbadini, *Giovanni da Ravenna*, 31–32; and PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:143C–44A.

regimen of food and drink that emphasized essential nourishment, which did not include wine. They should receive training in proper manners. He also gave explicit instructions for the structuring of leisure activities as he remembered his own outings with Francesco Zabarella. To sharpen one's diligence, one might hunt, fowl, or fish. To lighten one's burdens, Vergerio suggested riding a horse, taking a leisurely walk, exchanging humorous anecdotes, and listening to music. He commended games of skill because they required training and practice like the arts. On the contrary, he proscribed games of chance like throwing dice.³⁰

Among the most important elements of the learning environment were those that one could see. Vergerio never wavered in his commitment to the power of the visible. To characterize the program that he had in mind, he opened the treatise with a series of metaphors from visual arts such as architecture and pottery. For example, he states that adolescence was the moment to lay foundations for one's future life as an adult. He also encourages educators who work with adolescent students to mold their souls toward a life of virtue. Perhaps most pervasive was a metaphor from sculpture. Vergerio saw the liberal arts as polishing one's natural gifts of mind and body. That education was the culmination of a process: one must first select raw material of promise, then rough out a basic design, and finally polish and finish the work. Vergerio gladly left the initial stages of introducing children to Latin to the grammarians. They were the skilled stonecutters who made the polishing work of the humanists possible. Humanists, however, were to be the educational artists.³¹

The representation of moral character served as a matrix for virtually all of Vergerio's educational convictions. As a young student himself, he had asserted that "it befits every individual to conform himself to the examples of [good] persons." In the treatise, Vergerio repeated a challenge to educators first offered by Plato and then by Cicero. "Since [adolescents], given their inexperience in human affairs, are unable through reasoning to embrace the appealing visage itself of honest virtue, which, if it could be seen by the eyes, would excite wondrous affection for learning about itself . . . the next best approach consists in their attempting, from their zeal for glory and praise, to achieve the highest

³⁰ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 108-9, 111, 137, 142-45.

³¹ See *ibid.*, 97, 99; and Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 27-29. Cf. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 160, who notes that, in matters of education, Plautus compared the role of parents to that of builders (*Mostellaria* 125-26).

standards available.”³² Socrates had urged students to look into a mirror and see if they saw the moral person they would wish to be. Vergerio felt that students should look upon men of recognized character. Ancient heroes had been inspired to perform great deeds when they saw the funeral masks of their ancestors or frescoes which narrated great exploits. Vergerio felt that living examples would provide the greatest spur to virtue. One must choose a pedagogue with the greatest care and assure that he was a man of integrity.³³

Aware of the power of vivid illustrations, Vergerio used them in the treatise. To teach adolescents the danger of excessive drinking, he recalled the Spartan custom of bringing a drunken servant into formal banquets. Though no one should take delight in another's weakness, Vergerio felt that the sight would impress upon adolescents the demeaning character of drunkenness. He contrasted appropriate recreational activities to the emperor Domitian's habit of hunting flies with a sharpened stylus. When a visitor once asked if anyone were present with the emperor, a quick-witted servant replied, “Not even a fly.” To illustrate the principle that matters planted in tender minds are uprooted with great difficulty, Vergerio recalled that the Greek master of the lyre, Timotheus, had doubled his rates for students who had previously studied with another master. Vergerio felt adolescents who set out on the path to virtuous wisdom at a young age would continue on this path throughout life. The common people tended to believe the opposite. Therefore, Vergerio praised the young man who, when an elder told him that those who show special genius at a young age often end up being old fools, responded: “You must have been a true prodigy.”³⁴

The treatise reflected other personal qualities of its author. Vergerio suggested that young people take an hourglass into a library lest they waste their time. He always found it hard to be unoccupied. He also enjoyed competition with fellow students, perhaps because he was smarter than most. He remembered that poverty had proven an obstacle

³² PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 101 (citing Plato *Phdr.* 250D and Cicero *Off.* 1.5.15): “Cum enim bonum ipsum virtutis, honestatisque faciem, inexperti rerum complecti ratione non possunt, quae si posset oculis videri, mirabiles ad sapientiam (ut inquit Plato et Cicero meminit) de se amores excitaret, proximum est ab hoc gradu, ut gloriae laudisque studio ad optima conari velint.”

³³ *Epist.*, 37, 39, 55–56, 60; and *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 102–3, 107, 134–35. Similar sentiments were expressed in Pseudo Plutarch, “De liberis educandis,” 4B–5C; Cicero *Off.* 1.34.122; and Quintilian 1.2.5.

³⁴ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 108, 112, 118–19, 128–29.

to his own learning. In keeping with his medical training, he explored relationships between one's physical makeup and one's temperament. There was a physical cause for adolescent passions. Because adolescents were still growing and the humors were constantly in motion, heat abounded within their bodies.³⁵ To this day, it is unclear whether the treatise earned Vergerio a position as Ubertino's tutor. It may have simply been one more unsuccessful effort in his search for patronage. However, it did prove to be a masterful piece of academic synthesis, which touched a responsive chord throughout Renaissance society.³⁶

In antiquity, Pseudo Plutarch had written a treatise on the education of boys. Vergerio had now developed educational theory to treat the training of adolescents.³⁷ In so doing, he gave special attention to the training of society's governors. And in his most important ideas, he always focused on the importance of rhetoric in the curriculum. For Vergerio, oratory became the matrix of a curriculum for the formation of public servants. Rhetorical principles, in turn, shaped the content of the treatise. By attempting to fit disciplines to individual needs, Vergerio invested humanist education with an appropriate sense of decorum. By contrasting personal gratification to public utility, he had moral values, and not mere expediency, guide educational choices. Vergerio was the first in his day to conceptualize stages for education that followed human development. Adolescents needed a moral emphasis in their program that was wasted on children. Vergerio's convictions about the importance of education for the sons of the elite strengthened as he watched the tragedy of the Carrara family unfold over the course of the next three years.

³⁵ Ibid., 101 (cf. *Epist.*, 85), 102, 106, 107, 114, and 131-32 (cf. *Epist.*, 98-99).

³⁶ Smith, *Epist.*, xxii-xxiv, 249 n. 1, argued that Vergerio did not receive a position as Ubertino's tutor, whereas Calò, "Nota vergeriana," 237-52, took the opposite position. On the popularity of the treatise, see Robey, "Humanism and Education," 56-58.

³⁷ Henri-Irénée Marrou notes that the "Plutarchan" treatise paid surprisingly little attention to schooling per se and focused rather on broader questions of forming character; see his *A History of Education in Antiquity*, George Lamb, trans. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 147-48. Cf. the anonymous life of Vergerio published by Smith, *Epist.*, 479.

CHAPTER 7

Disenchantment at Court

A mong the first reactions to the *De ingenuis moribus* was a letter to Vergerio from Coluccio Salutati, who praised the treatise in generic terms for outlining a sound course of studies for adolescents that would assist even a mature adult's development. Salutati then offered three specific criticisms of Vergerio's work.¹ In two instances, the errors that Salutati highlighted had resulted from Vergerio's use of a scribe to make a copy of the work for Salutati. First, Salutati chided Vergerio for incorrectly characterizing Scipio Africanus as *nondum pubes*, when the sources clearly indicated that Scipio was eighteen years old at the moment he had rescued his father. Moreover, Salutati complained of Vergerio's orthography, especially his use of the Greek letter γ in words like *ydoneus* and *phylosophia*. Vergerio responded by claiming that, after checking the sources, he had intended to write *vixdum pubes* for Scipio. In fact, Vergerio did write *vixdum*; the scribe miscopied his autograph. As to orthography, Vergerio noted that he had only annotated the manuscript which he sent to Salutati; in the text itself, his scribe had chosen to use γ rather than *i*. Vergerio therefore upbraided Salutati for excessive concern to detail when the sense of the text emerged clearly. Both grammar and usage constituted valid norms for correct spelling, and so Vergerio didn't have to conform to Salutati's rule.

Vergerio's exasperation toward the end of his response stemmed in

¹ *Epist.*, 253–57, for Salutati's letter, and 257–62, for Vergerio's response. See further Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 6 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1983), 237, 287, 292, 400 n. 27, and 420.

large part from the stinging character of Salutati's most substantial criticism. Salutati claimed that, in the preface, Vergerio had mistakenly cited a corrupt text of Cicero (*Sen.* 3.8). The textual problem led to an inaccurate representation of the Athenian statesman, Themistocles. According to Salutati, Themistocles had attributed his stature (*nobilitas*) to Athens, his birthplace. Salutati urged Vergerio to correct his text and bluntly suggested that it would be better to throw the whole work out than to allow it to circulate in its present form.² Vergerio did little to hide his anger at Salutati's reaction. He took Salutati's portrayal of Themistocles as personally insulting. Throughout his life, Vergerio remained sensitive to the modest character of his own place of birth, Capodistria. Salutati's position implied that great men came only from distinguished cities. By the end of his response, Vergerio openly charged Salutati with pedantry.³

Vergerio felt that Salutati had ignored the fundamental points of his treatise and focused upon marginal issues. Salutati accused Vergerio of following a textual corruption which one could prove by examining the Platonic source from which Cicero had quoted. Vergerio responded with irritation to the suggestion about how to proceed in textual matters. He reminded Salutati that he had skills which the learned chancellor did not possess; he had not only consulted the Latin version of Plato but the Greek original as well. Still, Vergerio sarcastically observed, he preferred to err with Cicero in this instance. That reflected Vergerio's Ciceronianism and his sense that the observation of Themistocles intended to teach that external factors like birthplace did not produce human greatness. Athens had produced its fair share of inglorious individuals. And, had Themistocles been born in an obscure place like Serfo (or Capodistria), he might still have achieved equal fame by developing his many talents. Vergerio had just completed a treatise on humanist education that emphasized training individual genius, no matter where it was found. Salutati had missed the point. The interchange between Vergerio and Salutati was symptomatic of a change in Salutati's position among the younger generation of humanists. His

² *Epist.*, 256: "Melius est enim totum abicere quam posteris aut praesentibus legendo quod reprehendi valeat exhibere."

³ *Ibid.*, 259 ("in contentione praesertim, per quam vel modestissimi solent excitari"), and 261, where Vergerio likens his situation to that of one preaching before an audience composed exclusively of clergy who constantly carp on the slightest weakness in the sermon. Disgusted, the preacher upbraids his audience with the maxim that an eagle does not bother to capture flies.

cautious pedantry irritated them as they sought to advance their own careers.⁴

Vergerio did not carry on the debate any further with Salutati. He found his attention riveted upon the political scene at Padua as events came to a head for the regime of the Carrara.⁵ During the spring and the summer of 1402, the fortunes of the anti-Visconti coalition reached their lowest point. After proving an utter disappointment on the battlefield, the mercenary army led by Rupert of the Palatinate, pretender to the imperial throne, retreated from Padua to Germany in April. On 26 June 1402, the coalition's forces suffered a crushing defeat at the battle of Casalecchio.⁶ The defeat was especially costly for Francesco Novello. His two eldest sons, Francesco III and Giacomo, were taken prisoner during the battle. By early September, Giangaleazzo Visconti had secured possession of Bologna and encamped outside the walls of Florence. If Florence capitulated, there seemed no way to prevent Giangaleazzo from creating an Italian monarchy. Everything changed, however, with the sudden death of Giangaleazzo in September. His forces retreated from Florence shortly thereafter.

By November of 1402, Padua had cause once again to celebrate. The escape of Francesco Novello's two sons from their Visconti captors symbolized the reviving fortunes of Padua and the anti-Visconti coalition. Vergerio composed a celebratory poem to mark the return of Francesco III and Giacomo. As he had done in speeches ten years earlier, he used the harmony of the city-state on that occasion to signify the proper relationship between the Carrara ruler and the citizenry. Moreover, Vergerio emphasized that the brothers had escaped because of their sound physical conditioning. Their daring actions became an endorsement for those sections of the *De ingenuis moribus* where Vergerio had urged that

⁴ Witt, *Hercules*, 392-413.

⁵ See Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955; rev. ed., Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), 31-33; Philip J. Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974), 115-19; Benjamin G. Kohl, "Government and Society in Renaissance Padua," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2 (1972): 214-15; M. Chiara Ganguzza Billanovich, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Novello," *DBI* 20:658-60; and Albert Rabil, Jr., "The Significance of 'Civic Humanism' in the Interpretation of the Italian Renaissance," in Albert Rabil, Jr., ed., *Humanism in Italy, vol. 1 of Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 145-46.

⁶ Casalecchio today comprises a thriving commune situated along the Reno River approximately seven kilometers southwest of the city of Bologna.

the children of princes be skilled in sports such as throwing the javelin and swimming.⁷ With the duchy of Milan plunged into turmoil after the death of Giangaleazzo, Francesco Novello hoped to exploit Milanese weakness and expand his territorial control. However, the Venetian government blocked his plans, forcing Francesco to make peace with Caterina Visconti on 7 December 1402.

Francesco Novello bided his time, while new tensions simmered between himself and the Venetian Republic. In the summer of 1403, Francesco decided to defy the wishes of the Serenissima and attack Milan. Vergerio was entrusted with the task of drafting the official letter to Caterina Visconti announcing the opening of hostilities. What may have been the only letter that Vergerio wrote on behalf of his long-coveted patrons set in motion a process that would destroy their regime.⁸ Vergerio recapitulated the analysis of Francesco Novello and his advisors on foreign policy. The Visconti state was collapsing due to internal unrest and attack by the forces of Pope Boniface IX and the imperial pretender Rupert. The Carrara thus feared that neighboring states, once under Visconti control, might pass into the hands of Venice. To prevent such a situation, Padua declared war on Milan. On 21 August 1403, the Carrara army seized Brescia but had to abandon the city shortly thereafter.

Undeterred, Francesco Novello next attempted to reconstruct the territorial state his father had once controlled. By March of 1404, he had negotiated an alliance with the leaders of the Della Scala family. Together they planned to reestablish Della Scala rule in Verona and restore Vicenza to Paduan control. In early April, the Della Scala, accompanied by Francesco Novello, forcibly reentered Verona. Venice had already mobilized an army to stop Francesco Novello, and the Venetian forces beat Francesco to Vicenza. In response, Francesco placed his Della Scala allies under arrest and took direct control of Verona. Venice henceforth worked for the destruction of the Carrara regime. Efforts by Florence to mediate the conflict between the two former allies failed. From May of 1404 until November of 1405, Venetian forces steadily closed a vise around the city of Padua. With his population starving, Francesco sent a delegation to Venice to negotiate a surrender. The Venetians rebuffed

⁷ See PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 138–41; Tommaso Casini, "Notizie e documenti per la storia della poesia italiana: Tre nuovi rimatori del trecento," *Il Propugnatore*, n.s., 1.2 (1888): 352–55; and Roberto Cessi, "Nuove ricerche su Ognibene Scola," *Archivio storico lombardo* 36, fasc. 23 (1909): 101–2.

⁸ *Epist.*, 263–67.

his overture and only accepted the surrender of the city by a delegation of citizens led by Francesco Zabarella. The Venetian authorities had Francesco Novello and his son arrested and, in uncompromising fashion, strangled the Carrara in prison.

Francesco Novello's reckless policy of expansion had depleted Padua's resources and weakened his regime's popularity to the extent that the majority of Paduans welcomed their Venetian conquerors. As Padua and Venice engaged in their fateful confrontation, Vergerio wrote two works that dealt with the history of the Carrara and, by implication, the political situation of his times. They were a series of biographies of the Carrara despots (*De principibus Carrariensibus*) and a reflection on the ideal of monarchical government (*De monarchia*). After some debate among scholars, Carmela Marchente established through close textual analysis that Vergerio wrote the Carrara biographies.⁹ The vocabulary of the lives betrays marked similarities to Vergerio's favorite words and expressions in his letters. Moreover, though relying closely on late medieval sources, Vergerio revised their periods to match Ciceronian Latin.

As Vergerio had always advocated, he made the classicizing style of the work serve the substance of his political appraisal. He evaluated the conduct of the Carrara on ethical grounds. His study of Plutarch's biographies under the tutelage of Manuel Chrysoloras began to yield practical fruits. In the final analysis, moreover, the work betrays Vergerio's pessimism. Too often, avarice, ambition, and jealousy proved stronger than virtue.¹⁰ Though dismissed by commentators in the past as nothing more than a rehash of existing sources, Vergerio's biographies have more recently earned a measure of respect for his critical approach to historical sources. Vergerio deleted some material found in his sources and reported other matters with a parenthetical expression of skepticism. For example, he contemptuously banished the legendary origins of the Carrara family to barbaric fantasies from the Dark Ages, and he edited out stories of Paduan struggles from an era for which no validating doc-

⁹ Carmela Marchente, *Ricerche intorno al "De principibus Carrariensibus et gestis eorum liber" attribuito a Pier Paolo Vergerio seniore*, Università di Padova: Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia 23 (Padua: CEDAM, 1946), 43-55. Often revising terminology found in the sources, Vergerio resorted to classicizing words like *clam*, *sedulo*, *torquere/extorquere*. Among his characteristic parenthetical expressions, one frequently finds *quid/quod atinet*, *Non mirum igitur*.

¹⁰ For the general influence of Plutarch's biographies, see Vito R. Giustiniani, "Sulle traduzioni latine delle *Vitae* di Plutarco nel Quattrocento," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 1 (1961): 6-8.

umentation survived. Had the Carrara family continued to rule Padua, the work might well have won a place in the pantheon of early humanist historiography.¹¹

In evaluating historical causality, Vergerio tended to offer a variety of explanations. He used sentences joined by correlative conjunctions (*sive ... sive ... sive*) to acknowledge that humans rarely acted with pure motives. However, Vergerio did not retreat from stating the motive that, in his analysis, carried greatest weight. In the biography of Giacomino da Carrara (deposed in 1355, d. 1372), Vergerio discussed the plot that Giacomino organized to poison his nephew, Francesco il Vecchio, with whom he then shared the lordship of Padua.¹² Among the possible motives Vergerio first adduced family considerations. Once Giacomino had married Margherita Gonzaga in 1353, friction developed between her and Francesco's wife, Fina Buzzacarini. Moreover, Margherita had soon borne a first son to Giacomino, and Giacomino wanted him to inherit the office of despot. Secondly, Vergerio noted that Giacomino might well have been jealous of Francesco's success as a military leader; though younger than his uncle, Francesco had just been selected to lead an army of Padua's allies in war. The most compelling reason, however, lay in a simple fact of power politics. Principalities do not long allow for equal ruling partners; common sovereignty led to inevitable antagonism between the corulers. The divided house of Carrara could not stand.¹³

Vergerio sought to derive general principles from specific episodes because he believed that history illustrated the precepts of moral philos-

¹¹ Those who downplayed the importance of the treatise include Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, xx-xxii; Roberto Cessi, "Prefazione," in *Gesta magnifica domus Carrariensis*, *RIS*, n.s., 17.1.2:xxxiii; Marchente, *Ricerche*, 64-66; and David Robey, "P. P. Vergerio the Elder: Republicanism and Civic Values in the Work of an Early Italian Humanist," *Past and Present*, no. 58 (February 1973): 20-22, 34-35. For the beginnings of a positive reassessment, see Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981), 71-72.

¹² PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, *RIS* 16:183B-C. The lives treat the following members of the Carrara dynasty: Giacomo I (*capitaneus et dominus generalis*, 1318-20, d. 1324); Niccolò (d. 1344); Marsilio Grande (*signore*, 1328, 1337, d. 1338); Ubertino (*signore*, 1338, d. 1345); Marsilietto Papafava (*signore*, 1345); Giacomo II (*signore*, 1345-50); Giacomino and Francesco il Vecchio (*co-signori*, 1350-55).

¹³ Cf. J. K. Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, and New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 82-83, 275-82; and Benjamin G. Kohl, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Vecchio," *DBI* 20:649-50. In October of 1354, Francesco was named commander of the forces of a league organized by Venice to combat Archbishop Giovanni Visconti of Milan and Francesco d'Este, Visconti's candidate for despot of Ferrara.

ophy. He selected episodes for his biographies that had relevance for Padua in his own day. Ideally, the lives would serve Francesco Novello as a *magister vitae*. Carrara rule was born in a context of class conflict, which Vergerio illustrated in an anecdote from the life of Giacomo I (d. 1324), founder of the dynasty. Prior to assuming the office of captain-general, Giacomo had once represented a client in a lawsuit. His opposite number was a plebeian advocate who used the opportunity offered by the trial to denounce the arbitrary power exercised by noble members of the Paduan Commune. Having patiently listened to the commoner's insults, Giacomo approached him and whispered in his ear that he intended to cut out his tongue. That led the commoner to rage all the louder and curse his noble adversary for his arrogant contempt for the law.

In the meantime, Giacomo left the courtroom and returned home. He ordered his servants to bring a cart, the Carrara family's heraldic symbol, and to load it with grain and a pig ready for slaughter. He then presented the cart as a gift to his commoner adversary. The commoner accepted the gift with thanks and admitted that Giacomo had truly "cut out the tongue" which had denounced him. From that day forward, the commoner preached the virtues of Giacomo and became a partisan of his political faction.¹⁴ Even prior to his accession as de facto despot, Giacomo had set a standard for Carrara rule. The Carrara must be mindful of the social tensions between nobility and commoner. They should craft domestic policies characterized by beneficence toward the commoners. Nor did their standing give them a license to act as they wished. The commoner was right to denounce the nobility for that attitude. The governing elite must never subject persons through fear but conciliate them through benevolence.

Vergerio further noted that the Carrara had always accepted the role of political leadership in the context of a public assembly. The title of *signore* thereby acquired an element of legitimacy. The Carrara rulers would maintain public support by a program that assured peace and respect for the rights of all citizens. In domestic matters, the rulers should act in keeping with the generosity that had brought them to power in

¹⁴ See PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:122C-23A; and Kohl, "Government," 206-7. The story constitutes a rare case of material that Vergerio did not derive from previous sources. On those sources and Vergerio's tendency to synthesize, see Cessi, "Prefazione," 17.1.2:xxv-xxxiv; and Marchente, *Ricerche*, 11-37, esp. 35 for the originality of the account of Giacomo Grande and the commoner.

the first place. To illustrate his premise, Vergerio praised specific actions undertaken by Ubertino da Carrara (d. 1345). Ubertino had worked to complete the circuit of the walls around the city, he had erected the first public clock tower, and he had assured an ample supply of grain during a famine. He sought to assist the local economy by supporting the guilds, especially that of the woolworkers. Finally, he gave support to learning by sponsoring the study of twelve students (*adolescentes*) at the University of Paris and by bringing Raniero Arsendi to lecture on law at Padua's university.¹⁵ The Carrara despot must be a beneficent patron, filtering his mercy throughout the body politic.

When Vergerio suggested that the Carrara should foster peace and respect for the rights of all citizens, he also meant that they must repress the factionalism that had continually plagued communal government. Carrara ascendancy had been tied to their opposition to the brutality of the faction led by the Altichini and Ronchi families. In April of 1314, a street battle erupted between supporters of the two factions. Once the Carrara had won victory, they opened the jails to release Padua's political prisoners. To dramatize the evils of factionalism, Vergerio vividly described the revolting scene that greeted the liberators. The jail was a living hell filled with the putrid odor of the rotting bodies of the dead piled up everywhere. Those prisoners still alive were emaciated from hunger and covered with wounds from torture. Some were chained, while others had gags made of blocks of wood. Rather than guarantee free expression, the republican system had led to its brutal repression.¹⁶

Four years later, a new outbreak of factionalism within the oligarchy again threatened the city. The city's governors were divided over the strategy needed to counter the threat posed by Cangrande della Scala, the despot of Verona. The Carrara managed to parlay their popular support and their reputation for commitment to the common good into a defeat of their Maccaruffi opponents. In 1318, Giacomo da Carrara was given the title of captain and lord-general. Throughout the biographies, Vergerio depicted Carrara rule at its best when the family leadership managed to stand above petty factionalism and engender consensus among Padua's more powerful citizens. His reading of politics also contained realistic warnings. When factional fighting broke out between

¹⁵ PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:166A, 168B, 170E-71B.

¹⁶ See PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:134C-D ("alii vero immisso faucibus ligno, ne quid eloqui possent, etiam tunc aperto ore cernebantur hiantes"); and Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, 263-67.

members of the elite, the common people simply sided with the victorious faction. The crowd's instinct to back a winner meant that the Carrara must be vigilant to maintain their place as first among equals.¹⁷

For Vergerio, no political factor had proven more capricious than popular support, and no form of factionalism had caused graver problems than a battle for supremacy within the Carrara family. Vergerio recorded that Giacomo Grande had warned his children on his deathbed that only concord within the family would preserve the political prestige (*dignitas*) that they had attained. Discord, on the other hand, would corrupt or even destroy that prestige. His warning was not always heeded. After Giacomo's death, Niccolò da Carrara unsuccessfully challenged Marsilio for leadership of the family and the state. The outbreak of political violence coincided with a wave of petty extortion which idle young men perpetrated against wealthy citizens of Padua. Vergerio juxtaposed the forms of violence to imply that the adolescent behavior in both instances sprang from a lust to dominate. When Vergerio dealt with the assassination of Marsilietto Papafava da Carrara (d. 1345) by Giacomo II and Giacomino, he covered the realpolitik of the assassins with an ethical veneer. Vergerio felt that Marsilietto would inevitably see Giacomo II as a threat to his position because Giacomo had the moral probity which Marsilietto never attained. Giacomo II therefore acted out of justifiable fear for his own safety rather than out of ambition. Vergerio also saw the assassination as a sound lesson in power politics: Julius Caesar had rightly argued that, if rights must be violated, they should be violated for the sake of ruling.¹⁸

For Vergerio, no member of the Carrara line was more intriguing than Ubertino da Carrara (d. 1345).¹⁹ As a young man, Ubertino had ex-

¹⁷ PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:160E-61A: "Nam in contentione nobilium vulgi favor in eam se partem inclinare solet, penes quam victoria certaminis [RIS: certaminus] stetit."

¹⁸ PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:143C-44D, 162D-E, 174D-75E. Vergerio illustrated the ways in which Giacomo II manifested his political acumen by consolidating his control of Padua after the assassination. He arrested the members of Marsilietto's family and imprisoned those members of the regime who had opposed him. He appointed new *podestà* for the outlying towns, and he had the soldiers swear an oath of loyalty to himself. In terms of largesse, he freed two hundred prisoners from prison and declared a general amnesty, allowing the political exiles to return. So successful were his actions that the government sponsored a *palio* on the anniversary of his accession. That race, in turn, helped to maintain popular support for the regime. Later in his reign, Giacomo II had to confront a plot led by the Da Lozzo brothers, in whom he had placed special trust. He handed the conspirators over to the *podestà* to assure impartial justice and limited punishment to the leaders of the coup attempt. See *ibid.* 16:175E-76C, 177C-78B.

¹⁹ PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:158D-72C. Ubertino's change of heart was

hibited the worst qualities of adolescence—lust and rage. Vergerio laconically noted that Ubertino had contracted a painful disease “caused by overuse of his genital member.” With the help of a friend, he had murdered Guglielmo Dente, a member of a powerful noble family and a rival for the love of a courtesan. Exiled for the crime, Ubertino threatened to support Cangrande della Scala, Padua’s worst enemy. The Dente family, meanwhile, sought revenge by plotting to overthrow the Carrara. The plot erupted in a battle on Padua’s streets, and the Dente were eventually defeated. The family leader fled Padua, a mob sacked his home, and Ubertino took advantage of the turmoil to return from exile. He immediately sought revenge against Pollione Beccadelli, the *podestà* who had ordered his punishment. Beccadelli was murdered by a mob who supported Ubertino, and all public records that might incriminate him were burned. With similar bravado, Ubertino managed to outmaneuver Niccolò da Carrara and succeed Marsilio Grande as despot in 1338.

His initial actions as a ruler indicated that he had no intention of moderating his ruthless ways. Vergerio attributed Ubertino’s success to a skillful combination of forcefulness and cunning. In a campaign against the Della Scala forces for control of Monselice, both sides distinguished themselves for cruelty. While the Della Scala commander ordered Carrara prisoners hanged from the walls of the city in full view of the besieging army, Ubertino summarily executed his prisoners and had his soldiers disfigure the women fleeing the siege and then return them to the city. After Ubertino finally tricked Fiorello da Lucca into surrendering the citadel, he executed Fiorello and punished his soldiers by cutting off an ear. However, the victory at Monselice signaled a fundamental change in Ubertino’s approach to governance. He forbade the use of force under any circumstances and enjoined his supporters against exacting revenge for injury. Vergerio felt that Ubertino had begun to move beyond the license of adolescence. Yet he remained a leader who preferred to be feared rather than loved. Though he enriched the physical and cultural life of the city, he pursued his enemies with vigor. A patrician who denounced Ubertino in the Venetian Senate ended up being drugged, kidnapped, and ferried to Padua, where he was forced into a humiliating apology. On his deathbed, Ubertino told his confessor that

also noted by Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna; see his *De regimine principum*, Siena, Bibl. Comunale degli Intronati, cod. G.X.33, fol. 146v.

he felt no remorse for any of his past actions, which had increased his family's power. In fact, he was ready to do them all over again. To prove his point, he then forced the confessor to absolve him.

Vergerio also paid close attention to the foreign policy of the Carrara, as his recounting of the war between the Della Scala and Ubertino da Carrara and the episode with the Venetian patrician attest. The Carrara had come to power during a dispute between noble factions as to what policy to adopt before the threat of Cangrande della Scala (1291–1329). During the lordship of Marsilio Grande (1328–1338), the family had only succeeded in retaining a measure of control by surrendering the city peacefully to Cangrande. For two reasons, Vergerio felt that Marsilio had made a shrewd decision. First, Marsilio knew that his uncle Giacomo had been forced to abdicate his office of *dominus generalis* under threat from Paduan exiles who had sided with Cangrande. Secondly, given the difference in strength between Padua and Verona, it would have been suicidal to attempt to retain absolute control. Better to accept a role as Cangrande's vicar for the city rather than lose everything in a hopeless defense of liberty.²⁰

Further lessons garnered from the years of Marsilio's rule reinforce the sense that Della Scala Verona functioned for Vergerio as a regional power analogous to Venice at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Once allied with the Della Scala, Marsilio discharged sensitive duties for them. For example, Marsilio hanged the German mercenaries who had violated his orders not to plunder the countryside. The insubordinate conduct of the Germans proved how unreliable mercenary troops were. Subsequently, Marsilio had been caught in the middle of Della Scala gambits to increase their territorial control well beyond the Veneto. Mastino della Scala (1308–1351) and his brother Alberto (1306–1352) had allied Verona with Florence because both city-states wished to attack the Rossi family, who controlled Parma and Lucca. If the alliance succeeded militarily, then each member would gain territory. However, after capturing Parma in 1335 with the aid of Florentine troops, the Della Scala betrayed the Florentines by attempting to force Lucca to surrender to Verona. Vergerio then demonstrated that the "insatiable cupidity" (*insatiabilis humana cupiditas*) of the Della Scala proved self-destructive. In

²⁰ See PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:123B, 125D–26E (126D: "Ceterum vir prudens non quod vulgo placeret sed quod utilitati publicae conduceret advertebat. Summa igitur vi atque omni studio curabat, ut quae inita pax fuerat servaretur"); and Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, 266–71.

anger, Florence made a secret alliance with Venice, and the republican powers aided Marsilio in freeing himself from Della Scala overlordship. In a victory speech, as reconstructed by Vergerio, Marsilio thanked the legates of Florence and Venice for their assistance and unabashedly linked Padua's liberty to his despotism.²¹ Padua found herself on a chessboard on which more powerful pieces maneuvered.

Consequently, Vergerio portrayed Giacomo II (d. 1350) as an adept practitioner of a foreign policy guided by the best interests of the Paduan people. Giacomo had offered Padua a moment to prosper by signing peace accords with the neighboring rulers. He had personally visited Mastino della Scala to negotiate an accord with Verona and had also reached an agreement with Obizzo d'Este in Ferrara. He especially concerned himself to maintain a harmonious relationship with Venice after he and his descendants were named honorary citizens of the republic in January of 1346. Giacomo made Padua an active supporter of Venetian foreign policy by providing troops for Venetian campaigns, including the one in September of 1348 to quell a revolt in Capodistria. Moreover, he had come to the rescue of the Venetian government during a famine by supplying needed grain.²² Vergerio seems to have intended a clear message for Francesco Novello. He should seek peace in order to assure stability for Padua. He should reckon honestly with the region's powers: better to surrender a measure of autonomy in order to save the despotism. He should not break an alliance, nor could he rely on foreign mercenaries for help were he to antagonize his powerful neighbor. Moreover, he should beware lest his aggressive foreign policy lead to divisions within the ruling elite and within his own family.²³

Vergerio's series of biographies ended abruptly with Giacomo II. He never discussed the reigns of Francesco il Vecchio or Francesco Novello, nor did his veiled warnings have the desired effect of saving the Carrara. The Venetian victory spared him further research. However, the biogra-

²¹ See PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:151C, 152E-53D, 154D-57B (esp. 156E-57A: "Nunc vero demum, frustratis illorum molitionibus urbeque auxilio Dei / et Venetorum Florentinorumque cura ac studio liberata, denuo se principem electum, tamquam non videretur urbi quaesita vera libertas nisi et ipse princeps esset libertatis"); and Gian Maria Varanini, "Della Scala, Mastino," *DBI* 37:445-48.

²² See PPV, *De principibus Carrariensibus*, RIS 16:176C-77C; and M. Chiara Ganguzzu Billanovich, "Carrara, Giacomo da," *DBI* 20:674.

²³ In March of 1405, Francesco Novello's brother Giacomo (ca. 1350-1405) reached an accord with Venice to betray Padua. See M. Chiara Ganguzzu Billanovich, "Carrara, Francesco da, il Novello," *DBI* 20:659-60; and Ganguzzu Billanovich, "Carrara, Giacomo da," *ibid.* 20:676.

phies gave Vergerio a chance to reflect in more systematic fashion on the strengths and weaknesses of monarchical government. In theory, Vergerio thought that monarchy was the best form of government. Even so, he placed strict conditions on what he meant by monarchy. Though the treatise bears a subtitle "On the Best Principate," the work actually focuses upon the best prince. Throughout, Vergerio emphasized the character of the ruler, and not the structure of government, as the determining factor in successful politics. As the Carrara dynasty slowly expired, Vergerio became more pessimistic about the possibility of realizing his political ideals.²⁴

The monarchical government that Vergerio proposed as an ideal must be governed by a morally upright ruler. The city-state which he administers should be peacefully settled through written laws, to which the ruler freely subjects himself. Ideally, that state would enjoy social harmony among its various classes and would arrange its relations with other states in order to live in a world at peace. Only in that case would the analogy with divine rulership of the universe be fully realized. Those theoretical principles clashed with historical evidence. When Vergerio examined the first two dynasties of the Roman Empire, he found more evil rulers (the young Octavian, the elder Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian) than those he might fairly characterize as upright (the elder Octavian, the young Titus, and Vespasian when he controlled his avarice). The worst situation ensued when a ruler gave free rein to his libidinous appetites and tyrannized weaker subjects.²⁵

If monarchy in its historical manifestations had proven so disappointing, then why not advocate the rule of many? Vergerio claimed that, when improperly ordered, republics represented the worst evil; even when peacefully settled, republics still accomplished little good. By improperly ordered, he meant a situation in which magistracies were open to all citizens. Such a situation rendered the state sordid, imprudent, and weak. If magistracies were restricted to the worthy, then the state was afflicted by class struggle between patricians and plebeians. The constant

²⁴ See Baron, *Crisis*, rev. ed., 129–34; Robey, "Republicanism," 17–22; David Robey and John Law, "The Venetian Myth and the *De republica veneta* of Pier Paolo Vergerio," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 15 (1975): 33–35; and Quentin Skinner, *The Renaissance*, vol. 1 of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), 124.

²⁵ PPV, *De monarchia*, *Epist.*, 447–48: "Ex adverso autem nihil esse deterius potest quam cum in unius perditu hominis libidine collata sunt capita multorum, et perniciosae voluntati iuncta est facultas nocendi. . . . Sub hoc esse tuta cuiusquam salus poterat, defensa pudicitia, aut securae cuiusquam fortunae?"

state of violence inevitably led the citizens of an ordered republic to turn to rule by one person. The history of an Italian commune like Padua proved the point for Vergerio. Couldn't a code of just laws repress civic violence in a republic? Vergerio used two metaphors to express his diffidence toward the efficacy of rule by law. Much like a spider web, laws tend to catch only the weak. Moreover, much like parchment, laws may be stretched or shrunk according to the will of judges. Laws generally served the interests of the dominant class. Vergerio thought that a state needed a ruler above the laws who might ensure that no one acted with impunity in violating basic rights or written statutes.²⁶

Vergerio then offered his revised version of a famous account of the origins of political civilization, an account that Isocrates conceived and Cicero popularized. Vergerio's version comprised a skeletal outline for an anthropology of human nature, premised upon the principle that human beings by nature were more prone to evil than good. From a savage state in the wilderness, human beings ultimately evolved toward forms of urban civilization under the leadership of a natural aristocracy. Due to their virtue, those aristocrats were recognized as "leading citizens" (*principes*) within the nascent political community. Over time, however, the aristocracy shifted the criterion for membership from one's worth as a person to one's line of birth. According to Vergerio, the dynastic principle diluted the effectiveness of the governing elite. Nothing guaranteed that the child of a prince would achieve his father's greatness. The child was an unproven talent.

That anthropological pattern had revealed itself in the history of the Italian city-states of Vergerio's era. Those city-states had turned to despots to end the brutish violence caused by factions within the commune. To restore a humane order, the cities had chosen despots who had proven their worth in war and civic affairs. By and large, most of the original despots had successfully renewed social concord by crushing factionalism. However, problems soon arose when authority passed from the father to the son. Raised within the permissive environment of the court, the children often defamed themselves and their family by their cruelty and lust.²⁷ History offered only the slightest hope for a change

²⁶ Ibid., 448–49.

²⁷ Ibid., 449–50: "Ac simili quidem modo fieri solet, ut, cum quis virtute ac gloria militari magnum aliquando regnum adeptus est, aut, moderatione prudentiaque praestans, ad tollendas seditiones tumultusque ab suis civibus in principem electus est, ille pruden-ter, sin-

of heart on the part of spoiled children. The elder Octavian, once established as emperor of Rome, had quit the violent ways of his adolescence. Likewise, Vergerio recalled his study of Ubertino da Carrara, in whom public responsibility had reawakened a modicum of conscience.²⁸

The complex character of the elder Ubertino da Carrara proved to Vergerio the need for an educational program like the one that he had drafted for the younger Ubertino da Carrara. Proper training of the adolescent children of a prince might compensate for the inherent weakness of the dynastic system. Yet Vergerio's combined efforts in educational theory (*De ingenuis moribus*), history (*De principibus Carrariensibus*), and political theory (*De monarchia*) did not alter the mistaken policies of the Carrara dynasty. Aware of the precarious state of Carrara rule, Vergerio took steps to protect himself if he had to leave Padua. He established contact with Carlo Zeno, the famous Venetian admiral, after Zeno had married a widow who was the mother of two of Vergerio's distant cousins. When Zeno defeated the fleet of the redoubtable Maréchal Boucicault in the autumn of 1403, Vergerio celebrated his victory in a panegyric letter. Ever in search of patronage, Vergerio also recruited Zeno to testify to his respect for Venice. When Padua and Venice went to war, Vergerio found himself in the delicate position of a former resident of the Venetian Empire who now lived within the orbit of a court in open conflict with Venice.²⁹

Probably in those same years, Vergerio tried to have a friend intercede for him at the court of Ladislas of Naples. Vergerio listed his credentials in the arts, in medicine, and in civil and canon law, a combina-

cere, sobrie publicam rem administret; filii vero, ut sunt plerumque parentibus absimiles, favore potentiaque parentum praestantes succedant, harumque artium ignari omni crudelitatis ac libidinis scelere se contaminant."

²⁸ Ibid., 450: "Audivimus de Ubertino nuper, qui, cum antea complices multos ac ministros scelerum haberet, dominus factus seorsum eos evocavit atque admonuit ut ab his absterent: hactenus se in omnem rem comitem, posthac aequum principem praestitutum; de his, quae antea gesta essent, nullam se rationem habiturum; in futurum, ne quid admitterent, providerent. Eos igitur, qui ab solitis vitiis abstinere non possent, male habuit; ceteros, ut dignum aequumque fuit, coluit." The parallel passage in the lives (*RIS* 16:164A-B) reads "Convocatis enim amicis ac ministris his, qui omnis suae vitae rerumque omnium conscii et comites fuerant, 'Hactenus,' inquit, 'ita in hac urbe, ut in re aliena versati sumus; nunc nostram [*RIS*: nostrum] decet ut tueamur. Vi quicquam, aut per iniuriam fieri veto. Esto ius aequum omnibus: quod quis vestrum exoptat sibi praecipuum dari vel fieri, a me id petat; si secus egerit, minime placabilem sibi experietur Ubertinum. Quoque mihi carior quisque est, eo sibi magis prospicere iubeo.'"

²⁹ *Epist.*, 251-53, 269-73. On Zeno's victory, see also Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973), 199-200.

tion of studies that he felt made him unique among scholars. Lest there be any doubt concerning his academic credentials, he again passed public examinations and graduated from the University of Padua in early 1405. He could now go elsewhere with documentary proof of his achievements.³⁰ During his last years in Padua, Vergerio strengthened his credentials in ways attractive to the clerical elite. He had almost certainly become a cleric before he accepted a benefice in 1404. Moreover, he attended the lectures of Francesco Zabarella on canon law at the University of Padua, becoming a doctor in both branches of jurisprudence.³¹ As the Carrara regime collapsed and no other political opportunity presented itself, Vergerio explored the patronage network of the Church. For years, in public panegyrics, Vergerio had offered Saint Jerome as an exemplar of a humanist scholar who put his talents at the service of believers.

³⁰ *Epist.*, 125 n. 1, 274–75; and Leonardo Smith, “Note cronologiche vergeriane, III–V,” *Archivio veneto*, ser. 5, 4 (1928): 92–96.

³¹ Smith, *Epist.*, xxiv, 274 n. 2; and Annalisa Belloni, *Professori giuristi a Padova nel secolo XV: Profili bio-bibliografici e cattedre*, Ius Commune: Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte 28 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1986), 89–90, 204–208.

CHAPTER 8

Humanism's Patron Saint

Throughout the last decade of the fourteenth century and into the fifteenth, Pierpaolo Vergerio fulfilled to the best of his ability the vow he had made to preach a sermon in honor of Jerome on the saint's feast day (30 September). When Vergerio was unable to deliver a public sermon, he substituted a letter in praise of Jerome, which he sent to family members or intimate friends.¹ Jerome's feast should never pass without due acknowledgment. Of the ten sermons that survive, only three may be assigned precise dates. Two of the three were delivered after Vergerio had left Padua to join the Papal Court in 1405. They are best treated later in the context of his activities at the court. An Oxford manuscript of Vergerio's works indicates that he also preached a sermon at Padua in 1392. It has not been possible to determine the precise sequence of the other seven sermons. Nevertheless, the sermons develop consistent themes which reflect Vergerio's deepening appreciation that Jerome might well serve as a patron for humanist studies without detracting from his further achievements as a Christian confessor. The sermons therefore lend themselves to a synchronic treatment at this juncture in Vergerio's career.²

¹ *Epist.*, 91–93, 184–87. For the vow, see *ibid.*, 93, and *Sermo* 5: “decrevi singulo anno dum vixero laudes Hieronymi et praeclara merita in conventu optimorum recensere.”

² See Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, 91–93 n. 1; and David Robey, “P. P. Vergerio the Elder: Republicanism and Civic Values in the Work of an Early Italian Humanist,” *Past and Present*, no. 58 (February 1973): 27–28, 36–37. Robey, 27, argued on the basis of the immaturity of the style and the hesitant approach to the subject matter that the 1392 oration was “the earliest extant and possibly the first in the series.” In that sermon, however, Vergerio spoke of “his frequent citation” of a famous passage from one of Jerome's letters (“suo verbo quod crebro a me cum fit sermo de Hieronymo repetitum est . . .”). In a letter that

In addition to the sermon at Padua, Vergerio also delivered two sermons in the general vicinity of his hometown of Capodistria. When he had no better alternative, he spent the summer recess at home and then returned to Padua for the beginning of the academic year in mid-October. Such a schedule meant that he might well be in Capodistria for Jerome's feast. Though Vergerio knew that Jerome's birthplace of Stridon had once existed in that area of the Roman Empire, he publicly stated his skepticism that Stridon should be identified with Sdregna in the diocese of Capodistria. Given the similarities in orthography and pronunciation, popular imagination, always an unreliable source for Vergerio, had facilely identified the places. Yet Sdregna's location poorly matched Jerome's description of "a fortified town at the border between Dalmatia and Pannonia." Vergerio rebelled against any attempt to reduce Jerome to a purely local, ethnic hero. Jerome had distinguished himself as a champion of Latin culture, a learned citizen of a world empire.³ Any attempt to diminish that status represented a myopic provincialism which made light of Jerome's willingness to move. Vergerio felt that Jerome's example had relevance for a broad range of audiences.

To his credit, Vergerio succeeded in taking his message about Jerome into a variety of settings: churches, public squares, and monasteries. In keeping with classical principles for rhetoric, Vergerio tailored his message to the specific audience at hand. The character of that audience helps to explain the message that Vergerio emphasized. On at least three

was probably written in 1394, or 1395 at the latest, Vergerio indicated that he had already given three sermons on Jerome (*Epist.*, 91-93). Therefore, he began to preach the sermons around the time that he had returned to Padua in 1391.

³ *Sermo* 6: "Monstratur enim in proximo Sdregna, rus tenue ac paucis incolis habitatum, unde lumen hoc ortum memorant quod longe lateque fidem Christianam illustravit. Credibilem rem efficit vulgaris opinio a maioribus quasi per manus tradita et nominis corrupti, ut dicunt, similitudo quaedam, tametsi cetera parum conveniant. Nam ex oppido Stridonis historiae natum perhibent quod olim Dalmatiae Pannoniaeque confinia tenuit et a Gothis eversum est [Hieronymus *De viris illustribus* 135, *PL* 23:755]." See further *Epist.*, 145-46: "quem [Jerome] non procul a patriae meae finibus humilis locus sed hoc uno plurimis amplissimis urbibus / praestans edidit." *Sermo* 3 was also delivered before individuals whom Vergerio characterized as his fellow citizens living near Jerome's presumed place of birth. On Stridon, see Germain Morin, "La patrie de saint Jérôme; le missorium d'Exsuperius: deux rétractions nécessaires," *Revue Bénédictine* 38 (1926): 217-18; J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York et al.: Harper & Row, 1975), 3-5; and Giuseppe Cuscito, *Cristianesimo antico ad Aquileia e in Istria*, *Fonti e studi per la storia della Venezia Giulia*: Studi, n.s., 3 (Trieste: Deputazione di storia patria per la Venezia Giulia, 1977), 233-38. Cuscito argues that neither the Italian *Sdregna/Stregna* nor the Slavic *Žrenj/Zrinj* can derive from the Latin *Strido*.

occasions, Vergerio preached before an assembly of monks; once he arranged the ceremony in the early evening because at that hour the monks were free from work and from recitation of the Divine Office.⁴ To monks, Vergerio often presented a Jerome who was a champion among ascetics. Furthermore, Vergerio paid close attention to the general reaction of his varied listeners, acknowledging widespread disdain among them for his consciously innovative methods. He discerned three distinct groups within the large crowds he usually addressed. The illiterate common people came primarily for the spectacle and only took notice of unusual words or gestures. A larger group, which Vergerio estimated to comprise the majority, focused upon matters of style, especially decorum. Ever the doctrinaire guardians of orthodox preaching, they debated whether Vergerio uttered an inappropriate phrase or sentence. Vergerio also felt that a few of his listeners had actually come with an open mind and learned from what he had to say.⁵ Cognizant of the challenge, Vergerio approached his panegyrics as an educational activity. Through his praise of select activities of Jerome, he wished to enhance the moral sensibilities of his listeners; he knew full well that his style of preaching would be criticized by many. Vergerio compounded the problem by lionizing controversial aspects of Jerome's life.

From the beginning of the fourteenth century, Jerome had become the object of a popular cult in Italy.⁶ In the first decades of the century, an enterprising forger, perhaps a Dominican friar associated with the

⁴ Sermons 1, 5, and 10 were certainly delivered to monastic audiences. In *Sermo 5*, Vergerio observes: "Nunc autem vesperi a me evocati convenistis. . . ." Groups of Hieronymites lived in Padua and in Venice already in the last decade of the fourteenth century; see Daniel Russo, *Saint Jérôme en Italie: Étude d'iconographie et de spiritualité*, Images à l'Appui 2 (Paris: Découverte, and Rome: Ecole française, 1987), 130-39. In 1406, while Vergerio worked at the Papal Court, Pope Innocent VII issued a bull approving the Hermits of Saint Jerome of Fiesole; see Eugene Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1985), 70.

⁵ *Epist.*, 93: "Solebam ad populum dicere, quo semper ingens de illius rebus laudibusque auditura turba veniebat; multi praeterea indocti qui nudas voces gestusque notarent, plurimi qui dicendi tantum genus adverterent arguerentque, si quid ineptius excidisset, aliqui fortasse, si mihi liceat, qui edicerent."

⁶ See Millard Meiss, "Scholarship and Penitence in the Early Renaissance: The Image of St. Jerome," in *The Painter's Choice: Problems in the Interpretation of Renaissance Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 189-97; Rice, *Jerome in the Renaissance*, 49-83; Russo, *Saint Jérôme*, 37-65, 117-48; and John Henderson, "Penitence and the Laity in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, eds., *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1990), 229-49.

circle of canons at Saint Mary Major in Rome, had drafted three letters which he attributed to contemporaries of Jerome. The letters sought to fill gaps in Jerome's biography, narrating the holiness of his death and the miracles that he had performed before and after that death. With their tales of great wonders, the letters aroused strong emotions in the popular imagination. By midcentury, Giovanni d'Andrea (Ioannes Andreae), a professor of canon law at the University of Bologna, had given the cult a further injection of vitality. Dismayed by the lack of reverence for Jerome in Italy and stirred by the precedent of the forged letters, Giovanni d'Andrea composed a work entitled the *Hieronymianus*; the work included biographical material on Jerome and extensive recommendations for fostering his cult. Giovanni urged Italians to show their devotion by naming their children for Jerome or by building churches in his honor. The second half of the fourteenth century witnessed the institutionalization of this flowering cult. Five new congregations of vowed religious men were founded in Italy and in Spain, all of them dedicated to Jerome. Despite differences in emphasis, the spirituality of the Hieronymite congregations had several common characteristics. The congregations focused largely upon penitential exercises; their founders were often merchants who had spurned a life of profiteering to embrace an austere form of hermetic asceticism. Only after attracting followers did that initial impulse to the life of a hermit evolve toward a more communal form of religious life. In addition, the members of the Hieronymite orders lived a life of rigorous poverty and often rejected priesthood. Consistent with their ascetic impulse, the Hieronymites were hostile toward education and secular culture.

Thus, the first wave of the Renaissance cult of Jerome cherished the saint primarily as a wonder-worker and an ascetic. The revival of devotion to Jerome in Western Europe coincided with the advance of the Turks in the eastern Mediterranean. After the last stronghold of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem had fallen to the Turks in 1291, a legend began to circulate regarding the transfer of Jerome's relics from the Holy Land to the Church of Saint Mary Major in Rome. Inspired by the purported presence of Jerome in Rome, the aforementioned forger drafted accounts of the miracles that Jerome had performed for centuries on behalf of his devotees. Freed from the technical language of Scholastic theology, those accounts taught principles of Catholic doctrine to a popular audience. For example, one of Jerome's miracles served to demonstrate the existence of purgatory. Tapping currents of spirituality already fostered by the Spiritual Franciscans, the Hieronymite congrega-

tions married self-abnegation to a rigorous practice of poverty. However, the Hieronymites placed those practices under the patronage of Jerome, a patristic hero canonized by the Church. Unlike the Spiritual Franciscans, then, the Hieronymites ingratiated themselves to church authorities and quickly received official approval. The ascetic emphasis of their cult took visual form as well. Images of the penitent Jerome who beat his breast while praying in the wilderness replaced the iconographic tradition of Jerome as a learned doctor. Jerome now meditated on the cross and on the impurities of his soul, far removed from his study filled with books.

In keeping with his personal experience and his humanist studies, Vergerio offered his era a richer picture of Jerome. Vergerio closely associated the saint with the formative experiences of his childhood. In response to divine largesse, Vergerio's family offered a banquet on his feast for the local poor and for members of the extended family. Jerome handsomely repaid the family's devotion by protecting them during the exile caused by the War of Chioggia.⁷ Nourished in an environment that saw the family as honored clients of a powerful heavenly patron, Vergerio committed himself to a public act of devotion for the rest of his life. His sermons and letters in praise of Jerome were the fruit of that commitment. Vergerio sought to foster a broader cult of Jerome which would make him the patron saint of humanist studies.⁸ No enemy of learning, Vergerio's Jerome rather testified to the value of humanist learning for scriptural exegesis and for an authentically catholic piety. In keeping with recent traditions, Vergerio's Jerome also exemplified the value of asceticism. But, in Vergerio's depiction, that asceticism did not spring from a merchant's feelings of guilt and a concomitant need to atone for profiteering. It sprang rather from Vergerio's concern for interior freedom, which acquired authentic expression when one rejected the enslaving urges toward lust and self-aggrandizement. Vergerio used his portrait of Jerome to support his convictions about the value of rhetorical education based upon classical standards and to advance certain proposals for church reform. All of

⁷ See *Sermo 5* and *Epist.*, 186–87. The relevant passages are translated and discussed at greater length in chapter 1 above.

⁸ John M. McManamon, "Innovation in Early Humanist Rhetoric: The Oratory of Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 22 (1982): 24–27; and McManamon, "Pier Paolo Vergerio (the Elder) and the Beginnings of the Humanist Cult of Jerome," *The Catholic Historical Review* 71 (1985): 356–63.

those thoughts deepened from 1390 to 1405, as he continued to pursue his various degree studies and he personally came to know the heart of church government in Rome.

Vergerio praised Jerome for his knowledge of letters (*peritia litterarum*); that education made it possible for him to serve the Church in valuable ways. By letters, Vergerio meant proficiency first of all in the Latin language, and then in Greek and Hebrew. His linguistic ability made him an astute philologist. Vergerio also meant eloquence, in which Jerome attained the standard of excellence set centuries earlier by Cicero.⁹ Nor did Vergerio evade the controversial character of Jerome's humanist learning. On one occasion prior to his permanent move to the Papal Court in 1405 and repeatedly thereafter, Vergerio discussed Jerome's famous "dream." In a widely circulated letter, Jerome had described an ecstatic experience during which he felt himself lifted up to heaven. There, despite pleas of innocence, Jerome found himself condemned before the heavenly tribunal as a Ciceronian.¹⁰ Vergerio interpreted the dream as a warning to Jerome that he change his focus of study. Humanist learning should provide the skills necessary to undertake serious philological study of sacred letters. Vergerio suggested that virtually all of Jerome's exegetical works came after that frightening experience. He could never have accomplished his scriptural studies, however, without thorough grounding in the three relevant languages, nor did he cease to study pagan literature.¹¹

⁹ *Sermo 5*: "ipsum medius fidius Ciceronem mihi legere videor cum libros Hieronymi lego." In *Sermo 3*, Vergerio listed all of the subjects that Jerome had mastered: the three biblical languages, ecclesiastical and secular history, poetry, science (*notitia rerum*), and eloquence, in which he equaled the accomplishments of Cicero.

¹⁰ Hieronymus, *Ep.* 22.30 (CSEL 54:189-91). On the dream and its import for Jerome, see Arthur Stanley Pease, "The Attitude of Jerome towards Pagan Literature," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 50 (1919): 150-67; Edwin A. Quain, "St. Jerome as a Humanist," in Francis X. Murphy, ed., *A Monument to Saint Jerome: Essays on Some Aspects of His Life, Works and Influence* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1952), 201-32; Paul Antin, "Autour du songe de S. Jérôme," in *Recueil sur saint Jérôme*, Collection Latomus 95 (Brussels: Latomus, 1968), 71-75; and Kelly, *Jerome*, 41-44. For humanist attempts to deal with the dream's legacy, see Rice, *Jerome in the Renaissance*, 3-7, 84-115; McManamon, "Beginnings," 363-71; and Anna Morisi Guerra, "La leggenda di San Girolamo: Temi e problemi tra Umanesimo e Controriforma," *Clio* 23 (1987): 12-17.

¹¹ *Sermo 3*: "Posthac autem, ut ipse asserit, codices gentilium legit, sed tanto studio divina tractavit quanto illa ante non legerat, unde aut totum aut certe partem maximam suorum librorum postquam id evenit edidit. In quibus tamen tantum est peregrinae historiae, tantum gentilium fabularum externaque disciplinae, omnia ad fidei usum accommodata ut nihil aliud dies ac noctes egisse quam ut illa conquirat videri possit. Sed et de fide tot tantaque praescipsit ut nusquam ei vacasse libros gentilium legere facile credi queat." If Vergerio's sermon is correctly transmitted, then Vergerio revised Jerome's account in order to favor hu-

Ciceronian eloquence also supplied Jerome with a set of values worthy of his scholarly vocation. According to Vergerio, Jerome had consistently questioned himself about the relevance (*utilitas*) of his scholarly activities. Jerome could never be satisfied merely with the personal enjoyment (*otium, voluptas*) that his studies engendered.¹² He had undertaken vast scholarly projects such as the revision of the Vulgate translation in order to assist people in performing a variety of activities. For Vergerio, this was the supreme value of Jerome's scholarship: no one had ever written anything more essential to the life of the believing community. Secondly, Jerome proved to be a scholar in the Ciceronian mold because he had safeguarded the persuasive power of his ethos throughout his life. Vergerio fused the title of Christian *doctor* with the Roman ideal of the *orator*, an upright man skilled in public persuasion. "He was a doctor not only in word but in example and was no less distinguished by his life than he was by his language. That is the best type of learning, in which one confirms by the example of his life what he has publicly advocated that all should do."¹³

Jerome was victorious in the greatest of life's battles: he subjected himself to the dictates of an informed conscience. Three times Jerome gave dramatic proof of the degree of interior freedom that he had achieved. First, when all thought that he would be chosen as the next pope, Jerome left the city of Rome.¹⁴ He overcame the temptation to grasp supreme power in the Church and offered a noble example of indifference. By leaving Rome altogether, he also stymied those jealous Roman clerics who had intrigued to undermine his influence at the Papal Court. Secondly, Jerome went to study under Gregory of Nazianzus at a moment in his career when he was considered one of the most

manist studies. In the *Comm. in Epist. ad Galatas* (PL 26:427), Jerome claimed that he had not read any of the secular writers for fifteen years after the dream. One cannot categorically exclude the possibilities that Vergerio cited the source from memory or that a scribe made an error.

¹² *Sermo* 4: "Nec fuit, ut in plerisque, otiosa in hoc homine tanta doctrina." *Sermo* 7: "Alii vero doctores peritissimi, sollemnissimi, et fidei nostrae lumina, qui, ne ulla pars vitae suae inutilis nobis esset, die ac nocte, negotio et quiete, scribendo praedicandoque nobis profuerunt."

¹³ *Epist.*, 184-85: "Doctor non solum verbo sed exemplo, nec minus vita clarus quam sermone. Illud enim est optimum doctrinae genus, ut, quod ore quis faciendum monet, vita exemploque suo comprobet." See also *Sermo* 5: "Non solum enim verbo et scriptis sed re et exemplo docuit. . . ."

¹⁴ Jerome is the source for the assertion that almost everyone considered him worthy of the highest church office; see *Ep.* 45.3 (CSEL 54:325).

learned scholars of the day. Consistent with the ideals of Socratic philosophy, Jerome always remained aware of the limits of his knowledge. Finally, during his time as a hermit in the Syrian desert, Jerome suffered intense temptations to abandon his ascetic ways and return to the wild days of his adolescence.¹⁵ Vergerio accurately noted that Jerome's spiritual struggles intensified after he had abandoned the civilized world of the city. Those who simplistically saw such withdrawal as a flight from life's challenges did not understand the movements of the spiritual life.

Much like the Cicero whom Vergerio had imagined responding to Petrarch, Jerome made his fundamental decisions without allowing dogmas which overvalued the contemplative life to dictate his choices. Above all, Jerome concerned himself with fidelity to the values that he had advocated and with his usefulness to others. As Jerome had adapted his actions to the needs of his day, Vergerio adapted his message to the needs of his audience. When speaking before monks, Vergerio emphasized the importance of reform through observance of the rule. Too many monks, in Vergerio's estimation, had surrendered to a spirit of laxity and self-gratification. They should be inspired to change by the example of Jerome's humility and self-abnegation. Jerome's biographies of the desert fathers, replete with vivid descriptions of their austere lives, reinforced that message. Though monks in Vergerio's day might not reach the heroic levels of sanctity of those early hermits, they could certainly imitate the desert fathers in charity and good works. By renewing themselves, they might help monastic life to flourish once again.

Vergerio also used the panegyrics to indicate other areas where the Church had need of reform. He suggested that preaching had lost vigor in his day because preachers concerned themselves solely with the popularity they achieved from the pulpit. Their appeal to moral values from on high suffered because they themselves led such dissolute lives. Jerome had once reminded preachers that the faithful frequently ask themselves why a preacher did not do what he himself had urged.¹⁶ In

¹⁵ To describe those sufferings, Vergerio quoted eight different times a passage from Jerome's letter to Eustochium (*Ep.* 22.7, *CSEL* 54:152-54). On Jerome's adolescence, see Ferdinand Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: Sa vie et son oeuvre* (Louvain and Paris, 1922), 2:72-75. Jerome himself (*Ep.* 49.20) admitted that he was not a virgin.

¹⁶ *Epist.*, 184-85: "In qua re parum curiosi mihi praedicatores nostri temporis videntur, quibus omne in bene dicendo studium est, in bene faciendo nullum; quasi vero in fide de eloquentia, non de ratione vitae contendatur, aut orationibus, non bonis / atque sanctis

fact, the entire spiritual life of the Church languished due to the visible moral failings of the clergy. Unlike the ascetic Jerome, contemporary clerics were wealthy and well fed. Worse yet, they openly sought advancement in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Jerome had left Rome when his election as pope seemed guaranteed. In Vergerio's day, two rivals claimed to be pope and refused to consider any resolution, which might endanger their own standing. No one should be surprised, Vergerio observed, that utterly unworthy men sit on the throne of Peter today. The comforts of Rome and Avignon allured corrupt clergymen and fed their ambitions.¹⁷

Vergerio highlighted the importance of Jerome's historical contribution by drawing an analogy between the development of the Church and human development. Born in the age of the apostles and nourished throughout its childhood by the witness of the martyrs, the Church had by the fourth century reached the difficult stage of adolescence.¹⁸ To illustrate the challenges posed by that stage, Vergerio employed a metaphor from agriculture which had precedents in the parables of the Gospels. The seeds planted by apostolic preaching had sprouted into shoots, but they were still tender in the fourth century. Their growth was threatened by harmful plants. By a variety of methods, Jerome had cleared the Lord's field of potential dangers. He taught those humble enough to learn through the dignity of his language and the example of his life. Moreover, he corrected the stubborn errors of heretics, and he censured the unjust attacks of envious rival clerics. An abundantly merciful God had sent his doctor, a new type of Christian hero, to

viris, caelum pateat. Qui ergo recte docet et ita vivit ut docet, vere ille doctor est; qui aliter, mendax et se ipsum sententia sua condemnans." See also Hieronymus *Ep.* 52.7 (CSEL 54:426-27): "Non confundant opera sermonem tuum, ne, cum in ecclesia loqueris, tacitus quilibet respondeat: 'cur ergo haec ipse non facis?'"

¹⁷ *Sermo* 1: "Ex quibus factum est ut non tam summo pontificatu, ad quem etiam indigni pervenire possunt, quam regno caelorum, quo nullus pertingit indignus, se dignissimum redderet. . . ."

¹⁸ *Sermo* 3: "ille optimus caelestis agricola, quo possent bene nata semina salubriter *adolescere*, istos sibi ministros delegit qui et haereticorum zizania ex agro suo vellerent et teneram segetem spinis tribulisque ac ceteris noxiis herbis plantisque purgarent." *Sermo* 5: "At certe magis necessarium neminem habuit ecclesia: talem siquidem tum primum *adolescens* tumque primum oriens alumnus sibi expetebat, tam solidum cui inniteretur cardinem, tam fortem qui se tueretur patronum. Quem profecto non casu aliquo sed summa Dei providentia atque aeterno consilio illi tempori datum existimandum est, ut esset qui teneram et invalidam atque a multis adversariis impetitam ducatu, monitis, praesidioque suo protegeret." *Sermo* 10: "Cum enim in illa quasi *adolescencia* fidei nostrae undique pullularent errores, qui tamquam spinae teneram segetem suffocarent, opus fuit ut sollicitum ac fortem colonum agro suo Deus immitteret. . . ." The emphasis is mine.

educate the Church at that critical moment in its development.

It was also characteristic of Vergerio's sermons to place little or no emphasis on the miracles that Jerome had performed. By "passing over those miracles in silence," Vergerio implicitly censured the tales of wonder-working proffered by works such as the forged letters. They pandered to the credulous instincts of the common people. Vergerio offered a spirituality that emphasized the importance of learning for an elite group of educators and scholars. Nevertheless, in one of the sermons, he did describe a miracle that Jerome performed on behalf of two non-Christian travelers whose curiosity had led them to set out for the Holy Land in order to see the grave of Jerome. The two young men lost their way and wandered into a forest, where a band of thieves spotted them. Jerome intervened to protect the two travelers; he made them appear to be a much larger group. The robbers retreated because they thought they were outnumbered. After all involved had grasped the nature of Jerome's miraculous intervention, the pagans were baptized while the leader of the thieves became a monk. The miracle reflected Vergerio's convictions in three important ways. First, Vergerio had not forgotten the protection that Jerome offered to his family on the road to Cividale del Friuli. Secondly, Vergerio always considered vision the most significant and powerful of the human senses; he would easily recall an instance when Jerome accomplished his miraculous purpose by creating an optical illusion. Finally, of all of the miracles attributed to Jerome, Vergerio chose one worked on behalf of two nonbelievers. "Therefore, this glorious saint proved himself a ready benefactor toward the pagans and criminals. How much the more will he be generous toward Christians and especially Catholics who venerate his name?"¹⁹

In effect, Vergerio had dedicated himself to making Jerome a protector of the pagans in his own day, and he utilized the *a fortiori* logic found in the preceding quotation as his preferred rhetorical means to safeguard the legacy of classical culture. Such logic moves from a more difficult case to one that is less difficult in order to establish the likelihood of the latter. In Aristotle's terms, "if the harder of two things is possible, so also is the other."²⁰ Vergerio therefore argued that, if

¹⁹ *Sermo 7*: "Sic igitur hic gloriosus sanctus in gentiles et nefarios homines tam pronus tamque beneficus extitit; quanto magis in Christianos et vere Catholicos, si nomen suum venerabuntur, existet?"

²⁰ Aristotle *Rhet.* 2.19.2 (Loeb edition, Freese, trans., 267). Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms: A Guide for Students of English Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles,

Jerome proved so generous to pagans (the more difficult), then how much more generous will he be to Catholics (the less difficult). The entire assertion posits continuity between the two poles of action. Vergerio therefore moved logically from worthy pagans to pious Christians; both deservedly benefit from Jerome's saintly patronage. In fact, Vergerio also praised the pagans in his sermons because they had intuitively proper human actions without the advantages that Christianity offered to believers. That was especially true of the pagan practice of panegyric. "In keeping with ancient custom, the representations of distinguished men are displayed, their deeds are described, and their benefactions are recalled in order that succeeding generations strive through zealous emulation of virtue to follow in the path of those whom they esteem."²¹ Vergerio even applauded the pious lives of non-Christians in his own day in order to arouse compunction among his Christian listeners, who should feel no monopoly on divine assistance.

Vergerio thereby transformed Jerome from the enemy of humanist learning to a proof of the value of those studies for the believing community. In the course of the fourteenth century, previous humanists had had to deal with the figure of Jerome primarily because opponents of humanism pointed to Jerome as a religious authority clearly hostile to pagan learning. Already in 1315, the Dominican Giovannino da Mantova adduced Jerome's remark that "the verses of poets are the food of demons" to chide Albertino Mussato of Padua for his dedication to writing poetry. From Petrarch on, Jerome's dream and his condemnation as a Ciceronian haunted the humanists.²² Petrarch himself emphasized that Jerome continued to study Cicero even after the vision. However, Petrarch preferred the interiority of Augustine to Jerome's more activist spirituality. Coluccio Salutati felt that the vision taught one not to engage in exclusive or excessive study of classical works.

and London: Univ. of California Press, 1968), 108, offers the following illustration: "If you want to prove A has acted in a cruel way at one time, show that at another he acted still more cruelly."

²¹ *Sermo* 2: "Hinc veteri more proponuntur clarorum virorum imagines, describuntur gesta, et benefacta memorantur ut aemulatione virtutis studiosa posteritas assequi quos probat nitatur."

²² See Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati*, Medioevo e umanesimo 4 (Padua: Antenore, 1963), 54, 61; Ronald G. Witt, "Coluccio Salutati and the Conception of the *Poeta Theologus* in the Fourteenth Century," *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977): 540-41; and McManamon, "Beginnings," 363-68.

Vergerio had grown up with a special devotion to Jerome, and he deepened that devotion when he shifted his intellectual activities more and more toward humanist studies. In contrast to the portrait of Jerome as archenemy of pagan learning, Vergerio portrayed a Jerome who argued for the importance of such studies, especially for a "sacred philology."²³ He returned Jerome to the study, where he engaged in scholarship useful for believers. In communicating his portrait of Jerome as an exponent of humanist learning, Vergerio appropriately used a humanist medium. He consciously changed the manner of preaching common in his day. In the introduction to the sermon that he delivered in Padua in 1392, Vergerio told his audience that he was omitting a thematic verse from Scripture as the basis for his sermon. By so doing, he need not structure the discourse as an explanation for the relevance of the theme. Rather, he could concentrate on the life of Jerome. He therefore used the rhetorical topics of a panegyric oration as specified in the classical handbooks. He became conversant with those topics in 1392 and 1393 when he wrote epideictic speeches for the Carrara court. Vergerio claimed that he was doing what the most up-to-date preachers (*apud modernos*) commonly did. In fact, scholars who have investigated Renaissance preaching have found no earlier examples of sermons based upon classical norms.²⁴

In offering a synchronic treatment of the sermons, one risks focusing exclusively on their innovative elements. Other aspects of the form and the content demonstrate that Vergerio used discretion because he knew that his innovative techniques might cause undue controversy. He did eliminate a thematic verse and thereby changed the basic form of the sermon. Yet, to conclude the panegyrics, he often used a prayer in the traditional form of a doxology ("who lives and reigns as blessed for ever

²³ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, Michael Mooney, ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979), 72.

²⁴ See John W. O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 3 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1979), 85-86; Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, 248-49; and McManamon, "Beginnings," 369-71. The outline for a thematic sermon on Jerome prepared by Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419) provides a distinct contemporary contrast. The Dominican preacher proposes Luke 11:36 for a theme ("a lamp gives you light with its rays") and suggests that one discuss in the second division of the theme ("Lucerna fulgoris propter cognitionem veritatis") Jerome's "vapulationem cum prius studeret in doctrina Ciceronis." For the outline, see Vincent Ferrer, O.P., *Les Sermons Panégyriques*, H. D. Fages, O.P., ed., vol. 2 of *Oeuvres de Saint Vincent Ferrer* (Paris, 1909), 734. On Vincent's career as a preacher beginning in 1399, see Alvaro Hueriga, "Vincent Ferrer," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1994), 16:815-16.

and ever"). One sermon alludes to the farcical story that Jerome's enemies in Rome attempted to destroy his reputation by leaving a woman's dress near his bed.²⁵ The next morning the distinguished cleric unwittingly slipped the dress on and appeared for morning prayers. Vergerio continued to praise Jerome for his ascetic withdrawal into the desert; the sermons do not supply a univocal endorsement of the active life. That is not surprising, however, because no humanist endorsed the active life to the exclusion of the contemplative. Vergerio preferred the active life as the best way to utilize his humanist learning.²⁶ In one sermon, he even admitted a certain ambivalence about the extent of his worldly activities. "What must a wretch like myself do? Caught up in worldly affairs, I do not sufficiently fear the culpability of my past sins nor the punishment of the judgment to come."²⁷ While Vergerio could probably not pass over in silence his own compunction after he had just censured his monastic audience for worldliness, his self-questioning is genuine. He had spent much of his adult life searching for a powerful and wealthy patron who would offer him a post in public service. In those same years, he had stressed in his panegyrics the importance of detachment as exemplified by Jerome. Vergerio apparently sensed that he might compromise his own ethos, if he continued to applaud Jerome's detachment while he avidly pursued a position of influence.

Increasingly, Vergerio had forged the highly idealistic path of a Christian spirituality imbued with the spirit of Ciceronian ethos. In a letter from 1396, Vergerio claimed that human nature could reach no more sublime achievement than a truly pure mind. For Vergerio, that meant a mind devoted to God and endowed with a conscience that

²⁵ *Sermo* 3: "Nam muliebri veste per fraudem contextum de incontinentia calumniati sunt." See *Sermo* 2 for a typical doxology: "qui et vivit et regnat per infinita saecula benedictus." Sermons 1 and 2 have a doxology followed by a "telos" explicit. For the Renaissance use of the *telos* (Latin *finis*) explicit, see Dieter Wuttke, "Telos als explicit," in Fritz Krafft and Dieter Wuttke, eds., *Das Verhältnis der Humanisten zum Buch*, Kommission für Humanismuskforschung, Mitteilung 4 (Boppard: H. Boldt, 1977), 50-52. Wuttke's earliest example is a manuscript copied by Sozomeno da Pistoia in 1415, and none of his examples has the spelling of the Vergerio manuscripts.

²⁶ See Robey, "Republicanism," 28-31; and Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Active and Contemplative Life in Renaissance Humanism," in Brian Vickers, ed., *Arbeit, Musse, Meditation: Betrachtungen zur Vita activa und Vita contemplativa* (Zurich: Verlag der Vachvereine, 1985), 133-52.

²⁷ *Sermo* 10: "Quod si ita est, quid mihi faciendum est misero? qui saeculo implicitus nec praeteritorum culpam peccatorum nec futuri poenam iudicii metuo, sed errores impunitate sua nutrio negligensque paenitentiae deterior in dies fio."

recognized virtue. So transparent was that instinct for goodness that one naturally had regard for the common good and lost the capacity to deceive. Vergerio used Cicero's definition of ethos to explain his sense: "The man who has such an attitude, as Cicero says, will not even dare to do nor to conceive of something which he does not have the courage to advocate." It took special insight to recognize the blessed character of such a human life. The common people, deluded as always, thought that those men are happiest who rule over others and abound in wealth sufficient to indulge their every pleasure. In reality, such men constantly thirst for greater riches and are never satisfied. Their frustrations are chronic. One who obeys the most genuine impulses of human reason, on the other hand, generously donates his wealth for charitable purposes. His deep longing for union with God is partially satisfied in this life and arouses even greater desire for lasting union in the afterlife.²⁸

When Vergerio finally answered his own question about a remedy for his sinfulness, he offered a resounding affirmation that the mercy of God far exceeds the combined iniquity of all sinners. According to Vergerio's calculations, God had given grace abundantly to human beings. And Vergerio had personally experienced that divine generosity because Jerome had proved such an effective heavenly patron for himself and his family. Likewise, Jerome's example had spurred Vergerio to pursue virtue while continuing on the path of liberal studies.²⁹ Vergerio's maturing convictions, however, conflicted with reactionary currents of his day. While Vergerio spoke in praise of Jerome, who witnessed to the value of humanist learning for the Church, Carlo Malatesta destroyed a statue of Virgil for purportedly pious motives. While Vergerio denounced the common tendency to measure greatness in terms of slaughter in warfare and success in imperialism, Giangaleazzo Visconti embroiled his world in wars designed to bring him the crown of Italy.³⁰ Finally, while Vergerio offered Jerome's detachment as a

²⁸ *Epist.*, 180–82 (a letter to Remigio Soranzo from 16 August 1396). See esp. 180, where Vergerio cites Cicero *Off.* 3.19.77: "Puram autem mentem intelligo, non eam, quae ex defectu cognitionis facilis est falli, fallere nesciens, sed eam, quae ex abundantia virtutis omnibus bene consuli cupit. In qua nihil est duplex, nihil simulatum, nihil tectum; sed, quicquid est, omnia palam est. Qui hanc mentem habet, hic nedum facere, ut Cicero ait, sed nec cogitare quicquam audebit quod non audeat praedicare."

²⁹ *Sermo* 10: "Verum ea una res me consolatur et ad spem erigit, quoniam scio maiorem esse misericordiam Dei mei quam peccantium omnium iniquitatem." *Sermo* 5: "Huiusmodi effectio tum iucunda, tum et perutilis est mihi. Quotiens enim libet devotissimum mihi patronum meum coram induco; quo praesente, ne dicere quidem aut facere, ac ne cogitare quidem quicquam mali audeo. Sed, hortante eo, in bona studia et bonas spes laetus erigor."

³⁰ *Sermo* 2: "Magnum iudicatur in terris vicisse regna, occupasse imperium, devictis

remedy for the illness of the Schism, the two rival claimants and their supporters tightened their grip upon their respective spheres of authority. In the tradition of Christian prophets who found their lives "punctuated by dramatic conflicts with unjust authorities," Jerome had denounced the clericalism of Rome's ministers, never wavering in his courageous conviction that ecclesiastical rank does not make one a Christian.³¹ Vergerio now sought to bring that message to the Papal Court itself.

hostibus triumphasse, et terrenam gloriam plausu populorum et favoribus quaesisse mundanis." *Sermo 4*: "Solent autem in mundanis laudibus celebrari certamina, victoriae, triumphi, et cetera huiusmodi." Ibid.: "Si enim magnum est urbem aliquam aut regnum unum mundi vincere, quanto maius est mundum ipsum superare?" *Sermo 5*: "Solet quippe indocum vulgus existimare non posse magnas res fieri nisi caede, bello, armis, militia, obsidione urbium, captione, eversione, sed fallitur."

³¹ Hieronymus *Ep.* 14.9 (CSEL 54:58): "Non facit ecclesiastica dignitas Christianum." The characterization of confessors is offered by Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago, 1981), 101.

CHAPTER 9

Humanism and Church Reform

Sometime between March and August of 1405, Pierpaolo Vergerio returned to Rome. His willingness to accept employment in the Roman Curia marked a change of heart. During his first visit to Rome in 1398, Vergerio felt disillusioned by the moral corruption within the Curia and dismayed by the general neglect for ancient culture. Although Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, a trusted mentor, had repeatedly urged Vergerio to seek employment at the Papal Court, he had never done so. Both men loathed the unscrupulous politicking of Pope Boniface IX (1389–1404). During an embassy for Francesco Novello da Carrara in 1400, Conversini found it scandalous that Boniface had to place armed guards at the door and that he interrupted his attendance at Sunday Mass to discuss Giovanni's mission. Vergerio in turn, like most modern historians, remembered the pope for his crass practice of simony.¹ Boniface had subdued the Roman nobility and recovered cities which Giangaleazzo Visconti had seized within the Papal States, but he did so, according to the two humanists, through disastrous moral compromises.

Vergerio felt a new sense of possibility after Cosimo Migliorati was elected to succeed Boniface. The new pope chose the name Innocent VII

¹ See *Epist.*, 286–87, 365 (“nisi Bonifacius IX, qui Ecclesiae praeerat, pridem didicisset magis extimare pecuniam quam virtutem, quarum alterius inops erat, alterius opulentissimus”); and Remigio Sabbadini, *Giovanni da Ravenna insigne figura d’umanista (1343–1408)*, Studi umanistici 1 (Como, 1924), 80–85. Vergerio later tried to convince Conversini to come to Rome and work for Innocent VII; see Benjamin G. Kohl, “Introduction,” in Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, *Dræmalogia de eligibili vitae genere*, H. Lanneau Eaker, ed. and trans., Bucknell Renaissance texts in translation, in conjunction with The Renaissance Society of America: Renaissance Texts Series 7 (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1980), 28–29.

(1404–1406). Vergerio had cultivated Migliorati's friendship after their lengthy encounters in Rome. He trusted the pope's ethical convictions and knew firsthand his support for humanism. No sooner did Vergerio take refuge in Rome, however, than he found himself embroiled in a new outburst of civic violence.² For years, Roman affairs had been shaped by a struggle for hegemony involving kaleidescopic alliances among three powers: the papal forces, the Roman nobility, and Ladislas of Durazzo, the king of Naples (1400–1414). With significant aid from Ladislas, Boniface IX had managed to hold the Roman nobles in check. When Innocent became pope, Ladislas abandoned the papal alliance and maneuvered against him in tandem with powerful Roman nobles. Isolated, Innocent sought to negotiate an agreement with his noble rivals. In exchange for the restoration of certain privileges, the nobles would for their part acknowledge papal overlordship.

On 5 August 1405, shortly after Vergerio's arrival, Innocent received a delegation of nobles at the papal palace. After a typically stormy meeting, the nobles were ambushed on their way home by forces under the command of Ludovico Migliorati, Innocent's nephew. In ruthless fashion, Ludovico massacred the pope's political rivals, triggering a rebellion that forced Innocent and his court to flee to Viterbo. Vergerio vividly remembered the helter-skelter retreat, during which the papal party left the road littered with the dead bodies of its supporters.³ Eventually, the Roman nobles soured on their Neapolitan allies and drove them out. They invited Innocent to return to Rome as lord in exchange for promises not to rule by tyranny. The pope came back to Rome on 13 March 1406; in the intervening months, however, Innocent had concentrated solely on Roman affairs and ignored his promise to resolve the Great Western Schism.

Lacking conclusive evidence, scholars have failed to establish precisely what role Vergerio filled during his years at the Papal Court. His name is not found in the existing registers of Innocent VII. Some have therefore surmised that Vergerio functioned as a chancery secretary on occasional request and that he held no fixed curial office. Vergerio himself stated only that Innocent VII had given him "an office and benefices." Antonio Loschi, a contemporary humanist, indicated that Verge-

² *Epist.*, 284. Cf. *ibid.*, 224–27.

³ PPV, *Oratio* (inc: O altitudo divitiarum), Smith, ed., 132. For the massacre and its aftermath, see Leonardo Smith, "Note cronologiche vergeriane, III–V," *Archivio veneto*, ser. 5, 4 (1928): 114–24; and Smith, *Epist.*, 284–85 n. 1.

rio held a position similar to that of Leonardo Bruni, who had won the job of papal secretary in 1405.⁴ Vergerio's corpus includes a letter that he wrote in the name of Innocent to Coluccio Salutati as Florentine chancellor. The pope had enjoined Vergerio to respond to the arguments of a tract which Salutati had recently sent to Rome. Salutati's short treatise and Vergerio's letter dealt with the wisdom of the policies that Innocent had adopted to end the Schism.⁵

Acting on reports that the Avignonese pope, Benedict XIII, had proposed that both claimants abdicate, Salutati wrote to Innocent to endorse the idea. In his response, Vergerio first asserted that Innocent had already devised a better plan. The Roman pope intended to summon a council which would meet in Rome and address all problems that had arisen because of the Schism, including the possible resignation of both popes. Vergerio argued for that plan from the popular legal dictum that "what concerns all should be decided by all."⁶ Moreover, he upbraided Salutati for believing rumors circulating among the common people. Benedict had not indicated his willingness to resign but had only accepted to meet with Innocent. By acting on rumors, Salutati had demeaned his stature as an intellectual; by sending a copy of his tract to Benedict, he had placed the Roman pope in a very difficult position. Vergerio also intended to write a systematic refutation of the tract, but he abandoned the project after Salutati's death on 4 May 1406. Six months later, Vergerio wrote a letter to Zabarella in Florence which he conceived as a final

⁴ *Epist.*, 286 ("quod ab eo [Innocent VII] honore et beneficiis auctus sum . . ."), 326 ("Nam officia quidem quae gero, si in rationem forsitan deducantur, quamvis industriae magis praemia quam gratiae munera existimari debent, tamen a predecessore huius fere omnia accepi . . ."). The relevant passage in Loschi's poem is cited by Smith, *Epist.*, 454n; and George Holmes, *The Florentine Enlightenment 1400-50* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), 60 n. 2. For the debate on Vergerio's role, see Ludwig Pastor, *Storia dei Papi dalla fine del Medio Evo*, Clemente Benetti et al., trans. (Trent and Rome, 1890-1934), 1:131; Conrad Bischoff, *Studien zu P. P. Vergerio dem Älteren* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1909), ix, 45-46; Smith, *Epist.*, 286 n. 1; and Holmes, *Florentine Enlightenment*, 56-63. Vergerio had become an archdeacon of Pieve di Sacco in 1404 and still possessed that benefice in 1408. Apparently the antipope John XXIII named him a canon of Ravenna, for he is mentioned as such in a document from the Council of Constance dated 1414 (Smith, *Epist.*, 370 n. 1).

⁵ See *Epist.*, 278-83; and Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 6 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1983), 175-76.

⁶ See *Epist.*, 280: "Cum enim causa haec Ecclesiae universae communis sit, communi debet consilio decidi"; and Antonio Marongiu, "The Theory of Democracy and Consent in the Fourteenth Century," in F. L. Cheyette, ed., *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), 404-13.

tribute to Salutati.⁷ He acknowledged that Salutati had supplied an example of true learning throughout his life and seemed especially interested in the possibility of acquiring Salutati's books.⁸ The cool, almost mercenary tone of the letter suggests that the wounds opened by Salutati's criticism of the *De ingenuis moribus* had not completely healed.

By June of 1406, Vergerio had begun to manifest renewed optimism regarding Innocent's qualities of leadership. Through private conversations, Vergerio had come to believe that Innocent wished to govern with justice and compassion.⁹ Moreover, the pope had enacted key reforms of curial abuses. He had put an end to the manipulation of justice through bribes. He relished the opportunity to respond to formal petitions for assistance and willingly accepted advice in public consistories. In August, Vergerio delivered a sermon to commemorate the return of Castel Sant'Angelo to papal jurisdiction. Vergerio made the event signify the reconciliation between the Romans and their lord bishop. The massacre and violence a year before had unexpectedly led to civic concord. The Papal State now submitted to Innocent's authority, and he had negotiated a peace treaty with King Ladislas of Naples. Vergerio urged his listeners to see the hand of divine providence behind those events. God had permitted that the established order be temporarily overturned in order to assure necessary reforms. Stigmatizing the crimes committed by the pope's nephew and the rebellion that followed, Vergerio emphasized the harmony that must now reign by repeating the word "peace" seven times in a brief interval. He also lectured Innocent that spiritual arms alone had proven efficacious for the Church.¹⁰

The next two months were among the happiest that Vergerio had yet experienced. Toward the end of September, he wrote a poem in which he depicted an idyllic life at the court of a generous patron of humanism. The poem celebrated a poetry contest held in the late summer of 1406. Among the participants were Antonio Loschi and Francesco da

⁷ *Epist.*, 296-99.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 298: "Ex quibus [books] scire per te cupio quid extet et quam spem das exemplarium habendorum."

⁹ *Epist.*, 287-91.

¹⁰ *Oratio* (inc: O altitudo divitiarum), Smith, ed., 132-33, esp. 133: "Pacem enim is petiit qui ne daturus quidem poscentibus credebatur; pacem attulit qui in militari studio armorumque disciplina pacis hostis videri potuerat. Sic dum bello intentissimus creditur, tunc potissimum de pace deliberat; alter dum bellum animose prosequitur, pacem insperatam invenit et retulit." See also John M. McManamon, "Innovation in Early Humanist Rhetoric: The Oratory of Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 22 (1982): 11-12.

Fiano. Despite urgings by Vergerio, Leonardo Bruni declined to submit an entry, for he found himself occupied with the tasks that Innocent had delegated to him. By early September, for example, Bruni had composed a bull which announced that the pope was refounding the University of Rome. According to Bruni's text, Innocent intended to make the Roman university "a haven for all the humane letters" and especially for the study of Greek. Vergerio and Bruni were relieved that the pope offered institutional support to the humanist movement at that juncture.¹¹ For several years, learned clerics such as Giovanni Dominici had mounted a sustained attack on the humanist program. In sermons and tracts, Dominici claimed that humanist studies in no way assisted the salvation of a believer and at times proved harmful to authentic belief. Dominici specifically censured the manipulative power of orators trained in classical principles. The Florentine Dominican seemed to be the one opponent of humanism who understood, as Vergerio did, the importance of rhetoric to classical culture. He used his understanding of that importance to underscore the dangers of a humanist education.¹²

The polemic against humanism figured prominently in Vergerio's mind as he composed his annual panegyric for Jerome in 1406. Vergerio also became increasingly concerned that Innocent had failed to call the council he had promised in order to address the grave problem of the Schism. The rebellion in Rome the previous year had distracted Innocent, but, now that his authority had been restored, Vergerio wondered why he did not act on his promise. His panegyric on 30 September 1406 addressed both of those concerns. In response to the criticisms of Giovanni Dominici, Vergerio presented a Jerome who epitomized the humanist ideal of education given in the *De ingenuis moribus*. Jerome was

¹¹ On the poetry contest, see PPV, *Poetica Narratio*, Smith, ed., *Epist.*, 453; Holmes, *Florentine Enlightenment*, 60; and Germano Gualdo, "Antonio Loschi, segretario apostolico (1406-1436)," *Archivio storico italiano* 147, no. 4 (1989): 750-57. Loschi had come to Rome on an embassy for Doge Michele Steno; see Dieter Girgensohn, "Antonio Loschi und Baldassare Cossa vor dem Pisaner Konzil (mit der *Oratio pro unione ecclesiae*)," *IMU* 30 (1987): 32. For Bruni's bull, dated 1 September 1406, see Gordon Griffiths, "Leonardo Bruni and the Restoration of the University of Rome," *Renaissance Quarterly* 26 (1973): 1-10.

¹² See Berthold Louis Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati*, Medioevo e umanesimo 4 (Padua: Antenore, 1963), 63-65; Holmes, *Florentine Enlightenment*, 32-35; Peter Denley, "Giovanni Dominici's Opposition to Humanism," in Keith Robbins, ed., *Religion and Humanism*, Studies in Church History 17 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 109-14; Daniel R. Lesnick, "Civic Preaching in the Early Renaissance: Giovanni Dominici's Florentine Sermons," in Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, eds., *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1990), 214-22; and Giorgio Cracco, "Banchini, Giovanni di Domenico," *DBI* 5:657-64.

learned (*doctus*) and upright (*rectus*). He had mastered a variety of disciplines that included the three biblical languages, Ciceronian oratory, the interpretation of literature, history, and natural science. Vergerio also claimed that Jerome had approached theology from well-founded perspectives, utilizing his language skills for the exegesis of Scripture. That learning, moreover, constituted a prime element in his sanctity: Jerome was a doctor of the Church. At that point in his career, speaking before a distinguished audience of Roman clerics, Vergerio boldly confronted the problem of Jerome's dream. The dream had only censured excessive enthusiasm for humanist studies—not their pursuit. On the contrary, Jerome's career demonstrated that one produced a rich Christian theology by interpreting Scripture with sound training in the biblical languages and in history. Vergerio juxtaposed such theology to the tedious Aristotelian metaphysics he had described in the *De ingenuis moribus*.¹³

Furthermore, Jerome exemplified the sort of ethical cleric that the Church needed in every era. Jerome had more in common with the virtuous pagans of antiquity than he did with many clerics of the fifteenth century. At a moment when his election to the papacy seemed certain, Jerome left Rome for a life of asceticism. In contrast, the popes of Vergerio's time clung to their power, causing profound division within the institution. God had endowed Jerome with holiness sufficient to tame a lion in order to demonstrate that patience and kindness could overcome hatred. Innocent VII should approach the rival camp in Avignon with such a charitable disposition.¹⁴ The panegyric signaled that Vergerio's confidence in Innocent VII had lessened over time. He now felt that the pope needed public prodding to overcome his hesitation and to take the steps necessary to end the Schism.

¹³ PPV, *De ingenuis moribus*, Gnesotto, ed., 126: "Scientia vero divina est de altissimis causis et rebus quae sunt semotae a nostris sensibus, quas intelligentia tantum attingimus." *Sermo* 8: "tum vero scripturae sacrae veraeque theologiae perceptionem. . . . Nec me deterret quod damnatus fuerit eius studii aliquando Hieronymus, cum in extatica visione tractus ad iudicis aeterni tribunal et quinam esset interrogatus, pro Christiani nomine quod inter metum trepidationemque profitebatur Ciceroniani sibi nomen obici audivit. Neque enim res ipsa damnata est (sed fortassis eius studium vehementius) sine qua profecto vix sacrae litterae, certe non tanta cum voluptate, legerentur."

¹⁴ *Sermo* 8: "Cum mundo quippe gessit et vicit, quando sacerdos iam factus et summo sacerdotio dignus habitus ab urbe cessit pompisque saeculi et omni ambitioni mundanorum honorum renuntiavit. . . . Maledicos benefaciendo vincere et eorum in nos odium virtute patientiae mansuetudinis superare." In 1406, Innocent VII had issued a bull approving the Hermits of Saint Jerome of Fiesole. Gregory XII subsequently confirmed that approval; see *A Gregorio X ad Martinum V*, vol. 4 of *Bullarium diplomatum et privilegiorum Sanctorum Romanorum Pontificum* (Turin, 1859), 653–54.

Two months later, after the death of Innocent on 6 November 1406, Vergerio offered a severely critical assessment of his pontificate. Vergerio addressed the Roman cardinals in a public consistory held prior to the opening of the conclave to elect Innocent's successor and consciously used blunt language to convince the cardinals that they must postpone the election. He had been encouraged to adopt a more prophetic stance after he had discussed the problem of the Schism with Bernardino da Siena. The two reformers first met in Viterbo, where Pietro Filargo, the cardinal of Milan, had brought Bernardino to visit Innocent VII. Bernardino continued to visit the Papal Court right up to the time of Innocent's final illness. Twenty-five years old at the time, Bernardino had joined the Franciscan observance in 1402 and had been ordained in September of 1404. Vergerio and Bernardino shared a common appreciation for the theological style of Jerome and a common zeal for reform that they discussed during Bernardino's visits to the court. Vergerio used his speech to present their mutual analysis of the situation.¹⁵

Vergerio began by tracing the historical evolution of the Roman line of popes. The first two, Urban VI and Boniface IX, had shown open contempt for those who pressed for reunion. Vergerio specifically censured Boniface for his cruel tyranny; only his sudden death had prevented the defection of leading members of the Roman observance. Both popes had governed according to personal whim, and the Church had no constitutional agency like a Parliament to rein in popes who practiced such unrestrained freedom (*licentia*). If Vergerio openly condemned the actions of those two popes, he expressed disappointment with Innocent VII. The brevity of Innocent's reign and the complexity of the issue

¹⁵ PPV, *Pro redintegranda uniendaque Ecclesia*, Combi, ed., 373: "Libertatis vero dictandi, qua sum apud vos usus, veniam impetrat et causae dignitas, quae neglecta mansit, et meum ardens, quod est commune aequae Christianis omnibus, votum." On Bernardino's role, see *ibid.*, 369-70. In general, see Bruno Korošak, "Bernardino da Siena," in *Bibliotheca sanctorum* (Rome: Istituto Giovanni XXIII, Pontificia Univ. Lateranense, 1961-69), 2:1303; Iris Origo, *The World of San Bernardino* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 15-28, 183-205; Walter Brandmüller, "L'ecclesiologia di San Bernardino da Siena," in Domenico Maffei and Paolo Nardi, ed., *Atti del simposio internazionale Cateriniano-Bernardiniano* (Siena, 17-20 aprile 1980) (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1982), 404-6; and Cosimo Damiano Fonseca, "Bernardino da Siena e la vita del clero del suo tempo: A proposito del Sermo V *De rectoribus et praelatis*," in *Atti del simposio internazionale Cateriniano-Bernardiniano*, 502-6. None of those authors mentions the episode described by Vergerio. On the speech to the consistory, see Bischoff, *Studien*, 49, 55-63; Holmes, *Florentine Enlightenment*, 56-57; McManamon, "Innovation," 28-30; and Dieter Girgensohn, "Kardinal Antonio Caetani und Gregor XII. in den Jahren 1406-1408: vom Papstmacher zum Papstgegner," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 64 (1984): 146-49.

offered mitigating circumstances. Still, Vergerio revealed to the cardinals that he himself had first proposed the ideal of a council and that Innocent, in endorsing the proposal, had even agreed to resign there. Vergerio thought that Bernardino da Siena had strengthened Innocent's resolve to see the plan through. Regrettably, that was not the case: Innocent wavered until it was too late. Vergerio therefore added Innocent's name to the list of popes he reproached for not doing more to end the Schism.¹⁶

The blame did not end there. Immediately after his election, Innocent had sworn to a capitulation that obliged him to resign, and the cardinals, whom Vergerio now addressed, had guaranteed the oath. They must then share in his guilt. In fact, the ritual of taking an oath in the conclave had severely weakened the collective ethos of the cardinals: "we have seen the force of [your] oaths." To underline the error of the Roman party, Vergerio used the classic dilemma of expediency versus morality. In antiquity, theoreticians of rhetoric had debated whether political decisions should be made on the basis of expediency alone or whether morality must be factored into the decision. The Greeks favored expediency, while the Romans broadened the criteria to give morality a fundamental role. Vergerio censured the cardinals for reducing their decisions to matters of expediency and ignoring morality. They were only interested in maintaining their power, not in resolving the Schism.¹⁷

Staffed by persons of uncompromising ambition, the Roman Curia had continually obstructed any plan for reunion. Vergerio bluntly observed that many cardinals enter the conclave campaigning for election as pope and some even have no scruples about resorting to simony to assure victory. Did it make sense to believe that one who attained the office after such effort and expense would then turn around and resign it? Vergerio thought it far more likely that one who attained that supreme power "to bind and to loose" would then use the power to loose himself from any hindrances. Vergerio likewise censured the business of the Roman Curia. Massive wealth had accumulated to some of its members; they profited from the issuing of official papal documents, whose possession constituted superficial testimony of faith. Much time was spent in consistory litigating disputes over the ownership of property. All of

¹⁶ PPV, *Pro redintegranda uniendaque Ecclesia*, Combi, ed., 362–63, 365–66, 368–70.

¹⁷ Ibid., 360–61, 363, and esp. 366: "An in contentione honesti atque utilis, praesertim cum praeponderare honestum nemo negat, deliberatione vostra [*scripsi: nostra*] utile honesto praeferetur?"

those specific abuses were part of a general failure on the part of the Roman Church, which Vergerio analyzed according to a primitivist vision of church history.

In simplest terms, the Roman Church had become an institution which her founders would not recognize. Vergerio had the cardinals imagine that Peter and Paul now reappeared to observe the Roman Church. Though the two apostles had "neither silver nor gold" (Acts 3:6), the Roman Church had amassed incredible wealth. Though the early Church held all property in common (Acts 4:32), individuals with huge private estates now controlled the community's affairs. The ultimate origins of the Schism were rooted in the Church's enrichment to the benefit of a clerical class. Vergerio even censured artists in his day who depicted Peter and Paul dressed in rich garments. They distorted the historical reality and offered visual justification for the corruption of the Roman Church. Formerly endowed with leaders who concerned themselves with the reform of lapsed morals, the Church was now dominated by a clerical nobility who sought to recover lost territory or fortify that already in their possession.¹⁸

To dramatize the situation, Vergerio invoked two specters before his audience. The Roman clergy faced a genuine possibility of rebellion by the lay members of the Church. Exasperated by the unwillingness of the clergy to resolve the Schism, secular authorities might well try to impose a solution.¹⁹ Secondly, Vergerio gave the cardinals dramatic proof that God would severely punish their immoral behavior. From privileged knowledge, he revealed that Bernardino da Siena had warned Innocent of the dire consequences of further delay. Either Innocent would act to resolve the Schism and save his pontificate or God would punish him for his insolence. Innocent indignantly rejected Bernardino's ultimatum and threw him out of the papal palace. Within days, Innocent contracted the disease that soon proved fatal.²⁰ One refused to heed a prophet's warning at genuine risk.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, 361–62, 365–66, 368–69; and Gordon Leff, "The Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 18 (1967): 58–82.

¹⁹ PPV, *Pro redintegranda uniendaque Ecclesia*, Combi, ed., 362, 365–66, 373.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 370: "Is igitur, postremo adveniens, mandato se Dei venire dixit, iustum ei denuntiare, ut ad hoc intenderet, et libere se poneret in manu Dei. Quod si fecisset, eum, prout erat, verum unicumque papam mansurum; si minus, celeriter esse puniendum. Quem cum ille indignatus repulisset, adiecit is postea abiens, expeditam rem esse, derelictum esse hunc hominem a Deo. Itaque post non multos dies incidit in morbum, quo per supremum doloris cruciatum extinctus est."

Vergerio repeatedly urged the cardinals to delay an election in order to gain the time necessary for obtaining the resignation of Benedict XIII. Then the entire Church might meet in council to elect a new pope and see to the reform of the Roman Curia. Circumstances practically dictated the wisdom of delaying. Vergerio felt certain that the kingdom of France, linchpin for any solution, would shift from the Avignonese to the Roman observance if Benedict rejected the overture to resign. Moreover, Benedict faced pressure from the members of his court, who had lost patience as the dispute festered. Vergerio finally emphasized that the cardinals would perform an authentic act of charity if they delayed. They would no longer take their stand purely on legal rights but sacrifice even legitimate privileges for the sake of union. Till then, they had myopically thought to save their control of Rome, while risking the loss of the world and their souls. By surrendering their standing, they would revitalize their ethos and rally political leaders to the cause of union.²¹

The cardinals refused to postpone their task and elected the Venetian Angelo Correr, who took the name Gregory XII (1406–1415, d. 1417). The election created embarrassment for all those at the Papal Court who had opposed the election; that was especially true for Vergerio. The cardinals had subjected Gregory to the customary oath to resign, which Vergerio had ridiculed in his speech. Given the ethical dilemma, Vergerio bid to succeed Salutati as chancellor of Florence in late November of 1406. That having failed, he decided to remain at Rome and continue to serve the pope.²² In the first months after making the difficult decision, Vergerio felt a certain sense of vindication. He had achieved an even more intimate rapport with Gregory, whom he prodded to accept a meeting with Benedict XIII. Vergerio composed a letter to Benedict in Gregory's name, in which Gregory went so far as to volunteer to abdicate for the sake of peace. The popes needed to act quickly because the patriarch of Constantinople had recently sent inquiries about possible reunion between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. Vergerio seemed genuinely enthused: if the rival popes had the courage to act, Christ's body might be made one again.²³

²¹ Ibid., 360–61, 364–65, 367–68, 372–74.

²² Hans Baron, *Humanistic and Political Literature in Florence and Venice at the Beginning of the Quattrocento: Studies in Criticism and Chronology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1955), 107–13. On Vergerio's service to Gregory XII, see Bischoff, *Studien*, 63–69.

²³ *Epist.*, 305–6 n. 1, 326–29. Vergerio seemed to hope that Manuel Chrysoloras, once he had become a Latin Christian, might be elected as a reunion pope. See Vergerio's inscription

Over the course of the next three years, Vergerio found himself increasingly isolated within the Papal Court as he struggled against the "contagion of this place."²⁴ With increasing vehemence, he castigated anyone who opposed the plan for face-to-face negotiations. In the end, however, Gregory himself avoided the meeting with Benedict XIII after both had agreed to it. Shortly thereafter, Gregory held a public consistory at Lucca in which he violated his oath not to appoint further cardinals. Leonardo Bruni described the tense scene as Gregory forbade any of the cardinals to rise and speak. One after another, several of the cardinals abandoned the hall. When those cardinals fled from Lucca, Gregory sent a papal army into Florentine territory to arrest them.²⁵ Support for Gregory began to hemorrhage, yet Vergerio still hesitated to abandon the pope. In September of 1408, Vergerio once again spoke on Jerome before the Papal Court then resident at Siena; and once again he hammered away at his favorite themes. Jerome exemplified the appropriateness of secular learning and the importance of interior detachment, which he proved by ceding to his enemies and withdrawing from Rome.

In those troubled years, when Vergerio himself came under attack by rivals in Rome, he must have felt a special kinship to Jerome. Vergerio found it odd that those men stirred up sinister rumors against him. Neither his family background nor his wealth endowed him with great standing, which usually aroused their envy. He thus conjectured that they resented his special intimacy with Gregory. In 1408, when the Papal Court had traveled to Rimini, Vergerio was evicted from a comfortable dwelling by Cardinal Antonio de Calvis. In a letter to Francesco Zabarella, Vergerio ridiculed the overbearing cleric, characterizing him as a human body with a cow's intelligence. By the summer of 1409, with support rapidly eroding, Gregory XII had summoned a council at Cividale del Friuli. Vergerio still remained with the pope, apparently hoping that he would obtain a benefice as deacon in Cividale, the place

for the tomb of Chrysoloras in Guarino Guarini da Verona, *Epistolario*, Remigio Sabbadini, ed., *Miscellanea di storia veneta* 8, 11, 14 (Venice, 1915-19), 1:114: "vir doctissimus prudentissimus optimus, qui tempore generalis concilii Constantiensis diem obiit [15 April 1415] ea existimatione ut ab omnibus summo sacerdotio dignus haberetur. . ."

²⁴ *Epist.*, 315.

²⁵ Leonardo Bruni, *Epistolarum libri VIII*, Laurentius Mehus, ed. (Florence, 1741), 59-65 (*Ep.* 2.21). An English translation by Gordon Griffiths is published in *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts*, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies 46, in conjunction with The Renaissance Society of America: Renaissance Texts Series 10 (Binghamton, N.Y., 1987), 328-32.

where he had been happiest during his childhood. Instead, he found himself in the most serious trouble of his life. During a brief visit to Venice, he was seen by one of Gregory's nephews on a boat owned by acquaintances from Ferrara. Assuming that Vergerio was trying to sneak away to the Council of Pisa, the papal nephew had him detained. After a night under house arrest, Vergerio managed to clarify his position and regain his freedom.²⁶

In late summer of 1409, the Council of Cividale concluded its deliberations without succeeding in rallying support for Gregory. When Vergerio failed to gain a benefice, he left the Papal Court and returned to his hometown of Capodistria. It must have been an especially bitter pill for him to swallow. He closed himself off in silent isolation for almost two years and only broke his silence to congratulate Francesco Zabarella when the antipope John XXIII (1410–1415) named him a cardinal in 1411. Vergerio followed that initial communication with a flurry of letters to Zabarella which betrayed his violent shifts of mood in Capodistria.²⁷ Vergerio once commiserated with his close friend, characterizing his rise in rank as an ironic lowering of status. Zabarella now found himself on the lowest rung of the seniority ladder, and he was saddled with the considerable expense of maintaining a household befitting his status. Vergerio's next letter, however, indicated his readiness to join that household at a moment's notice. Zabarella quickly stilled his enthusiasm by warning him to eat all that he could before coming to Rome, where he would risk starvation. Vergerio asked Zabarella for a copy of the declaration by John XXIII forgiving all debts owed to the Holy See; perhaps he had such debts himself. The same letter excoriated the tawdry spectacle that followed a major cleric's death in Rome. While the cleric himself faced probable punishment in hell, given the high percent-

²⁶ See *Epist.*, 304–6, 316–19, 328–29; Pio Paschini, *Antonio Caetani Cardinale Aquileiese* (Rome, 1931), 59–60; and Philip J. Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974), 127–33. According to Vittorio Zaccaria, Vergerio did not participate in the Council of Cividale and was represented at negotiations for the benefice by Niccolò del Tacco, a canon of Capodistria; see his "Niccolò Leonardi, i suoi corrispondenti e una lettera inedita di Pier Paolo Vergerio," *Atti e memorie della Accademia di scienze, lettere ed arti in Padova*, n.s., 95 (1982–83): 107–8 n. 41.

²⁷ See *Epist.*, 330–43; and Agostino Sottili, "La questione ciceroniana in una lettera di Francesco Zabarella a Francesco Petrarca (tav. IV)," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 6 (1973): 34–35. On the radicalization of Zabarella's thought, see Thomas E. Morrissey, "Franciscus Zabarella (1360–1417): Papacy, Community, and Limitations Upon Authority," in Guy Fitch Lytle, ed., *Reform and Authority in the Medieval and Reformation Church* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1981), 37–45, 47–54.

age of immoral persons at that rank, his debtors and the Apostolic Camera battled for his inheritance. Vergerio's mood rarely seemed more despondent than the day on which he wrote to Zabarella to narrate the tragedy of a peasant family from the Euganean hills near Padua. The place that had supplied the two scholars with respite during their days in Padua had turned into a diabolic sort of killing field. An entire family had suffered a tragic series of deaths, for which Vergerio attributed responsibility to fortune alone.²⁸

Vergerio ultimately accepted an invitation from Zabarella to rejoin him at the Papal Court on the eve of the Council of Constance (1414–1418).²⁹ The years of the council marked a turning point in Vergerio's life. He exchanged letters with a new generation of humanists in the Veneto, to whom he bequeathed his most cherished educational ideals.³⁰ In 1414, he praised Gasparino Barzizza as a true intellectual of ethos who had dedicated himself to training adolescents in the practice of rhetoric. Over the next fifteen years, Barzizza helped to codify Ciceronian

²⁸ *Epist.*, 341–43. Vergerio described how the family's tragedy worsened through a tragic series of errors. Having watched their father castrate bulls, two sons did the same thing to their baby brother. Realizing their error from the baby's screams, they hid in the bread oven and fell asleep. When their mother returned from the fields, she lit the oven as she hurried to prepare the evening meal. In horrifying sequence, she discovered that she had immolated the elder sons and that the baby had bled to death. When her husband returned, he killed his pregnant wife in a fit of mad rage and was awaiting his own execution. See also Remo L. Guidi, *Aspetti religiosi nella letteratura del Quattrocento* (Rome and Vicenza: Libreria Internazionale Edizioni Francescane, 1973–83), 5:71–72, 612–13.

²⁹ Smith, *Epist.*, 351 n. 1. For Vergerio's activities in the first years of the council, see Walter Brandmüller, *Bis zur Abreise Sigismunds nach Narbonne*, vol. 1 of *Das Konzil von Konstanz 1414–1418* (Paderborn et al.: Schöningh, 1991), 117, 164, 399 (where Brandmüller failed to identify the “Dr. iur. utr. Pietro Paolo da Capodistria” with Vergerio).

³⁰ *Epist.*, 351–52 (PPV to Barzizza), esp. 352: “cum tradendae artis rhetoricae curam susceperis, tantum in promovendis adulescentibus et studio tuo et felicitate quadam valueris, ut iam plurimos qui probe ex arte dicere valeant proferre possis. Qui si morum quoque praecepta sequuntur et vivendo te imitabuntur, duplicis gloriae fructum ex tua conversatione reportabunt.” Ibid., 356–59 (Guarino to PPV), esp. 358: “Nam, quotiens Manuel Chrysoloras . . . venit in mentem, nonne et ille tibi magnum quempiam et eloquentissimum expetere oratorem videtur, qui eum non tam sui quam posteritatis gratia scriptis exprimeret, ut homines integerrimum, optimum, sapientissimum, sanctissimum virum sicut publicum quoddam intuerentur speculum et exemplar, unde sibi bene beateque vivendi praecepta proponerent et ab eo, qui caelestem in terris vitam egit, imitationem virtutis haurirent?” Ibid., 360–62 (PPV to Niccolò Leonardi); and Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), 10. I am aware of fifty-one manuscripts, which, in all likelihood, contain the letter to Niccolò on Barbaro's *De re uxoria* (*Ep.* 137 in Smith's edition). On Vergerio's inscription for the tomb of Chrysoloras at Constance, see Guarino, *Epist.*, Sabbadini, ed., 1:112–14; Giuseppe Cammelli, *Manuele Crisolora*, vol. 1 of *I dotti bizantini e le origini dell'umanesimo* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1941), 167–70; Zaccaria, “Niccolò Leonardi,” 100 n. 25; and Brandmüller, *Bis zur Abreise Sigismunds*, vol. 1 of *Das Konzil*, 51–52, 151–52.

standards by writing a series of rhetorical textbooks. In 1415, Vergerio received a letter from Guarino da Verona after Vergerio had written to propose a posthumous memorial for Manuel Chrysoloras. Guarino insisted that Vergerio was the proper Phidias to immortalize their Greek professor. In subsequent years, Guarino made Vergerio's *De ingenuis moribus* the basis for his influential pedagogy. Finally, Vergerio wrote a brief letter to his friend Niccolò Leonardi, applauding Francesco Barbaro's *De re uxoria*. Vergerio approved the treatise on wifely duties for its precepts and eloquence. Later publishers used Vergerio's letter as the ideal endorsement for Barbaro's tract.

At the council itself, Vergerio twice performed official functions. In 1414, he was named one of the examiners of the voting (*scrutator*). The following year, he participated in the council's diplomatic embassy to the Iberian kings and to Benedict XIII. The emperor Sigismund himself led that delegation, and the contacts between emperor and humanist laid the grounds for their future collaboration. Vergerio received no further mention in the records of the council until the summer of 1417, when he became involved in a dispute over procedural matters, which temporarily ruptured his close ties to Francesco Zabarella. Vergerio sided with the emperor Sigismund, who wished to see the council delay the election of a pope until it had attended to the reform of the Roman Curia. Zabarella favored allowing the cardinals to elect a pope and then, under papal leadership, having the council attack problems of church reform.³¹

On 10 August 1417, following the common university practice for announcing a disputation, Vergerio posted on the doors of the churches of Constance a series of propositions that he was willing to defend publicly.³² He was responding to members of the cardinals' party who had drafted theses a month earlier; they argued that the council should not postpone the papal election. Most cardinals at Constance preferred to proceed with the election in order to have the greatest say in that choice and to limit the emperor's influence over subsequent questions of reform. Their July theses condemned those who urged delay for the purposes of reform; once the pope was elected, he would attend to the problems afflicting church government. The party of the cardinals vili-

³¹ See Gasparo Zonta, *Francesco Zabarella (1360-1417)* (Padua, 1915), 110-13; Smith, *Epist.*, 370-73 n. 1; and Thomas E. Morrissey, "Emperor-Elect Sigismund, Cardinal Zabarella, and the Council of Constance," *The Catholic Historical Review* 69 (1983): 366-70.

³² See PPV, *Quaestiones de Ecclesiae potestate* in Finke, ed., *Acta*, 3:667-69 (where Vergerio is described as a doctor of medicine and civil and canon law as well as "poet laureate"); and Bischoff, *Studien*, 73-76. The rebuttal offered by the party of the cardinals is found in Finke, ed., *Acta*, 3:669-70.

fied the imperial party for disrupting the council. By such behavior, the emperor's adherents fomented continuing division within the Church, even though they claimed to contribute to its resolution. Ominously, the theses offered by the cardinals' party suggested a taint of Hussitism in anyone who dared to affirm the contrary.

Vergerio nevertheless attempted a reply on the emperor's behalf, and, by using the typically Scholastic medium of the *quaestio*, he compounded the personal risks. On previous occasions, Vergerio had minced no words in censuring clerical immorality. But those sentiments were uttered in public speeches, and rhetoricians had always granted the probable nature of the truth they affirmed. Now, however, he resorted to a medium that initiated a process of disputation conceived to determine definitive truths. Responding directly to the insinuation of heresy, Vergerio claimed that the imperial party had elaborated an ecclesiology contrary to that of Hus but respectful of the council's authority to decide the manner and time for the election. In effect, Vergerio suggested that the Church had the best opportunity to reform itself in the absence of a pope. Historically, the popes had often hindered any serious reform activity. Without an all-powerful monarch seated on the throne of Peter, the Church had incomparable freedom to act. Were the cardinals to elect a pope without first attacking the moral problems of the institution, no serious reform would ever take place. Vergerio's past experience with popes like Innocent VII and Gregory XII had made him skeptical that the popes desired to put their own house in order.

Because Vergerio advocated the imperial position, he risked a trial for heresy. When the emperor's opponents harshly denounced his theses, he withdrew his offer to debate their content publicly. Eventually, the cardinals and the representatives of the five nations elected Martin V (1417-1431), and Vergerio was given a post in the imperial court. However, before either of those events occurred, Francesco Zabarella died on 2 September 1417. His death elicited from Vergerio a moving tribute in the form of an epistolary eulogy. The eulogy was his final pronouncement on the intellectual's role in Church government. Characteristically, Vergerio contrasted Zabarella's heroism with the incompetence and immorality of the majority of churchmen.³³ Throughout his career, Zabarella had struggled against his own reticence to rise within

³³ See *Epist.*, 362-78; and Gregorio Piaia, "La fondazione filosofica della teoria conciliare in Francesco Zabarella," in Antonino Poppi, ed., *Scienza e filosofia all'Università di Padova nel Quattrocento*, Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova 15 (Padua: Centro per la storia dell'Università, and Trieste: LINT, 1983), 431-37.

the ecclesiastical hierarchy. To Vergerio, Zabarella seemed odd for two reasons: he did not seek promotion, and he was eminently qualified to receive it.³⁴ Had Zabarella not died suddenly, Vergerio felt certain that the council would have chosen him as the pope to reunify Christendom.

As such, Zabarella would have been the antithesis of the preceding popes, whom Vergerio named in the letter. Boniface IX had proven himself an avaricious simoniac, Gregory XII a liar, and John XXIII an almost total incompetent. Vergerio looked back upon the history of the Schism and argued that it had lasted so scandalously long due to the intransigence of popes and clergy. The Church generally suffered from excessive ambition on the part of its ministers. Francesco Zabarella had shown himself anything but ambitious. He offered supreme proof of his pastoral dedication by helping to organize the Council of Constance and by risking his own reputation to steer it toward a successful conclusion. Despite their disagreement over ways of proceeding, which Vergerio attributed to haste on the part of the cardinals, the two had remained close friends. Zabarella's contribution as professor and scholar were also readily visible at the council. His former students filled the hall at Constance, belying any divorce between learning and piety. Through his letter, Vergerio helped to shape a portrait of his friend and patron that reflected humanist ideals. In medium and message, humanists like Vergerio have proven effective makers of Renaissance myths.³⁵ With Zabarella's death, Vergerio lost his closest link to the Paduan and Roman past. His future was with the emperor Sigismund who rewarded Vergerio for his support during the council's controversies by hiring him to serve in the imperial government. Vergerio had finally succeeded in his long quest for a political position that would allow him to practice his humanist skills. After the council, Vergerio left Constance for Buda and Prague. Ironically, at that moment of personal triumph, Vergerio receded into the shadows of history.

³⁴ Vergerio even listed the offices that Zabarella did not receive. In the 1380s, the Florentine chapter had elected Zabarella as their bishop despite the fact that he was a young foreigner. Vergerio characterized their judgment as much more prudent than that of Pope Urban VI, who overturned the election in favor of his candidate. Vergerio claimed that Zabarella would have been named a cardinal in 1398 if Boniface IX had not valued money over virtue. In 1409, Zabarella refused his election as bishop of Padua because it might seem a challenge to Gregory XII during the Council of Pisa. In 1411, John XXIII finally awarded Zabarella the red hat that he so richly deserved. Vergerio conceded faint praise to John, noting that his appointment of learned cardinals ranked among the few memorable deeds of his brief period in office. Cf. *Epist.*, 346.

³⁵ John M. McManamon, *Funeral Oratory and the Cultural Ideals of Italian Humanism* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), 11-16, 66-68.

CHAPTER 10

Imperial Bureaucrat

On 21 May 1418, in the company of the emperor Sigismund, Pierpaolo Vergerio left Constance for Buda. For almost twenty years, until Sigismund's death in 1437, Vergerio served the emperor in a variety of functions. Despite the sketchy character of the documentary evidence, it seems clear that Sigismund sought to utilize the full range of Vergerio's talents. Vergerio's legal training, his firsthand knowledge of northern Italian politics, his experience with church government, and his expertise in the Latin and Greek languages all contributed to his worth at the imperial court. Given Vergerio's dual degree in civil and canon law, Sigismund had Vergerio accompany him when he convoked an assize in various parts of the realm.¹ Those official convocations of the emperor's court treated disputes at the highest levels of imperial administration. Already in November of 1418, Vergerio signed himself as a witness to the judgment that Sigismund rendered at Passau in Bavaria against a group of exiles from Toul. From 1424 to 1425, Vergerio also witnessed decisions in separate disputes that pitted Eric of Pomerania, the king of Denmark, against the nobles of Holstein and Günther von Schwarzburg, the archbishop of Magdeburg, against the city of Halle.²

¹ See Wilhelm Altmann, ed., *Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigismunds (1410–37)*, vol. 11 of *Regesta Imperii* (Innsbruck, 1896–1900), 1:261 (#3714), 1:298 (#4233a), 1:418 (#5894), 1:419 (#5911), 2:12 (#6199), 2:14–15 (#6247); and Leonardo Smith, *Epist.*, 379–82 n. 1. The assizes convoked from 1424 to 1425 met at Buda (Ofen), Viségrad (Blindeburg), and Tata (Totis).

² With the support of the Danish Diet (1413) and Sigismund (1424), Eric of Pomerania launched two unsuccessful wars against the counts of Holstein (1416–22, 1426–35). For the dispute between Archbishop Günther and Halle, see Joseph Von Aschbach, *Die Zeit der Hussitenkriege bis zur Eröffnung des Basler Konzils*, vol. 3 of *Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds* (Hamburg, 1841; repr. Aalen, Germ.: Scientia Verlag, 1964), 3:232–33.

Vergerio shared those official responsibilities with other courtiers from Italy such as Brunoro della Scala, Ognibene Scola, Bertoldo Orsini, and Ludovico Cattaneo. In fact, Sigismund had gathered a group of Italian expatriates whose previous experience made them valuable counselors as he pursued his reactionary dream of regaining a measure of direct control over former imperial possessions in Italy. That failing, Sigismund at least sought to challenge Venetian occupations in the frontier regions of Friuli and Dalmatia.³ Typically, he blundered when he moved to achieve both of those goals. For Vergerio, it must have been a pleasure to see Ognibene Scola once again. The two had met twenty-five years earlier at Padua, where Scola had become a trusted advisor to Francesco Novello. Subsequently, Vergerio had Scola deliver a prized copy of his *De ingenuis moribus* to Coluccio Salutati. Strongly anti-Venetian in sentiment and married to a Veronese citizen, Scola had participated in the unsuccessful revolt to restore Brunoro della Scala to power in 1412. Now, the two itinerant scholars seemed amenable toward a pro-imperial politics for the northern Italian world that had nurtured their humanist and legal skills.⁴

Because of Vergerio's knowledge of church politics and his experience at the Papal Court, the emperor gave him important responsibilities as he attempted to resolve the thorniest problem of his reign. Vergerio immediately assisted the efforts to end the rebellion that had erupted in Bohemia after Jan Hus was executed at the Council of Constance. The Hussite question robbed Sigismund of the opportunity to savor his moment as the "new Constantine" who had sponsored the

³ Denys Hay and John Law, *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance, 1380-1530*, Longman History of Italy (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 235.

⁴ See Carlo Cipolla, *La storia politica di Verona*, Ottavio Pellegrini, ed. (Verona, 1900; rev. ed., Verona: Edizioni Valdonega, 1954), 212-14; Roberto Cessi, "Nuove ricerche su Ognibene Scola," *Archivio storico lombardo* 36, fasc. 23 (1909): 115-26; and Smith, *Epist.*, 208n. Scola was present at Passau in 1418, at Viségrad in 1424, and again at Tata in 1425. In the latter instance, Ludovico Cattaneo da Verona also witnessed the document. In 1426, Vergerio had occasion to renew his acquaintance with Antonio Loschi when Loschi received the poet's laurel while on an embassy to the emperor Sigismund. See Germano Gualdo, "Antonio Loschi, segretario apostolico (1406-1436)," *Archivio storico italiano* 147, no. 4 (1989): 750-64; and Dieter Girgensohn, "Antonio Loschi und Baldassare Cossa vor dem Pisaner Konzil (mit der *Oratio pro unione ecclesiae*)," *IMU* 30 (1987): 30-35. There is no evidence that Vergerio accompanied Sigismund to his crowning as king of Italy at Milan in 1431 or to his imperial coronation at Rome in 1433. See Poggio Bracciolini's famous description of the event in Helene Harth, ed., *Lettere a Niccolò Niccoli*, vol. 1 of *Lettere* (Florence: Olschki, 1984), 119-25 (English translation by Phyllis Gordan, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggio Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*, Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies 91 [New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974], 176-81).

reunion council and kept it in session through the dark days when John XXIII had abandoned the meeting. Sigismund had badly miscalculated the council's approach to the question of Hus's orthodoxy. Rather than absolve the Czech preacher, as Sigismund had anticipated, the council condemned him as a heretic. That put the emperor in a quite vulnerable position: having granted Hus safe conduct, he had nonetheless allowed his burning at the stake. Sigismund actually changed his mind about the wisdom of protecting Hus once he had become convinced that the Czech reformer was really a heretical subversive. After Hus's death in 1415, Sigismund tried to mollify the anger among his supporters by proposing that the council allow the Bohemians to continue to receive communion under both species. The council agreed to reexamine its earlier decree prohibiting the practice. However, on 22 February 1418, the council issued a definitive condemnation of communion under both species, and war soon erupted in Bohemia. The rebellion prevented Sigismund from obtaining the crown of Bohemia after his brother Wenceslas IV died in 1419. Infuriated, Sigismund decided to settle the matter by recourse to arms, always his weakest suit.⁵ On 17 March 1420, Pope Martin V issued a bull declaring a crusade against the Hussite rebellion; Vergerio figured among those who promulgated the bull at Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg) in the diocese of Prague on 16 August 1420.

Sigismund's motley army of Germans and mercenaries laid siege to Prague, but stiff resistance from the Hussite camp forced the emperor to withdraw. He again shifted tactics and tried to negotiate a solution. On 8 February 1421, the Hussites of Prague published a letter announcing the results of a colloquy between Catholic and Hussite theologians. The theologians had debated the four articles which Jakoubek of Stříbro had formulated to specify Hussite demands. The emperor selected Vergerio as the official orator who would communicate the final position of the Catholic camp. The moment offered precisely the sort of political opportunity for which Vergerio had honed his humanist training: before an audience of the most powerful nobles, he had to convey a political decision of the utmost importance for the peace of the empire. Three notaries from each side stood ready to record the decision. According to

⁵ As a legate for Pope Martin V, Cardinal Giovanni Dominici visited Sigismund in 1418 in order to convince him that a crusade was necessary against the Hussites. That afforded Vergerio an opportunity to see a former antagonist in the debate over humanist studies. Dominici died at Buda in 1419; see Giorgio Cracco, "Banchini, Giovanni di Domenico," *DBI* 5:662.

the Hussite account, Vergerio emphasized the substantial accord reached between the disputants. They fully concurred on the demands articulated in three of the four articles. Even in the case of the fourth, which posited communion under both species, the two camps had endorsed the practice as permissible and commendable. However, the Catholic side objected to making the practice obligatory because the scriptural evidence did not establish that Jesus had explicitly enjoined it. Vergerio concluded by offering the emperor's optimistic opinion that "with the Lord's help, even on this point we hope that there will be concord." The crowd purportedly erupted in spontaneous cries of joy.

Within weeks of the colloquy, however, Catholic participants denied the veracity of the Hussite version; the Catholic delegates had actually insisted on significant revision of all four articles. Intransigent militants on both sides seized the opportunity to foment discord, and the emperor in turn resumed a belligerent stance. In August of 1421, Sigismund invaded Bohemia for a second time, and in January of 1422, the rebel forces once again won a decisive victory against the emperor's army. By 1432, many lost battles led Sigismund to sponsor discussions between a Hussite delegation and a commission of the Council of Basel. In 1433, those negotiations yielded an agreement known as the *Compactata*, which in effect contained imperial endorsement for the justice of all four articles discussed by the theologians twelve years earlier. After the emperor announced the agreement at the Diet of Iglau in 1436, he finally managed to attain the crown of Bohemia, which he wore for only a few months until his death in 1437. Nationalist sentiments fed by religious dissension transformed central Europe into a roiling cauldron of hatred. Agreement at Constance on allowing the laity to receive communion from the chalice might have spared Christendom "much anguish." Vergerio had used his oratorical skills to persuade the contending sides to focus their efforts on that precise issue.⁶ His failure mirrored in many

⁶ *Epist.*, 461–63. Francis Oakley supplies background on Hus and the controversies and gives further bibliography in *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), 195–203, 294–301. Oakley states that the four articles were: (1) that there be free preaching of God's Word; (2) that the Eucharist be freely administered under both kinds, bread and wine, to all the faithful; (3) that all priests, including the pope, should give up all superfluity of temporal possessions and live as models; and (4) that the realm be cleansed of all public mortal sins. The judgment on the importance of the article on communion under both species was offered by Hans-Georg Beck et al. in Hubert Jedin and John Dolan, eds., and Anselm Biggs, trans., *From the High Middle Ages to the Eve of the Reformation*, vol. 4 of *History of the Church* (New York: Seabury, 1982), 472: "If there could have been an accommodation at Constance in regard to the chalice, Christendom

ways the broader failures of Sigismund, who consistently suffered defeat at the hands of the Hussites, lost his last outposts in northeastern Italy, and saw Philip the Good annex imperial fiefs for the duchy of Burgundy.

Vergerio also served Sigismund as a court scholar. Somewhat ironically, given the lamentable state of Sigismund's imperial authority, he had Vergerio translate into Latin the Greek works of Flavius Arrianus, the *Anabasis Alexandri* and the *Indike*. A talented general and imperial administrator under the emperor Hadrian, Arrian had given the Roman world a straightforward account of the life of Alexander the Great, avoiding the tendentious extremes of previous biographers.⁷ The commission gave Vergerio an opportunity to reflect on the historian's craft and the translator's methods. Vergerio censured three groups of historians for undermining the discipline's credibility: those who pandered to popular taste by recording unsubstantiated rumors, those who sought to secure funds or settle accounts by inflating or libeling a patron's reputation, and those who slighted matters of content by occupying themselves with style alone. In treating Alexander the Great, Arrian had consulted the best sources, and he applied sound methods in using those sources. Good history could be well written and faithful to the evidence.⁸ In determining the proper approach to translation, Vergerio settled on a middle course. He rejected a word-for-word rendering and considered any attempt to recreate the elegance of Greek prose in Latin to be futile. Vergerio aimed to present the sense of Arrian's text in a translation that would be comprehensible to the broadest audience of readers.⁹

Vergerio's translation was so plodding that later humanists retranslated the works. Enea Silvio Piccolomini found Vergerio's autograph manuscript, and in 1454 sent the codex to humanists at the court of Alfonso I of Naples. With the help of Greek scholars such as Niccolò da Sagundino and Theodore Gaza, Bartolomeo Facio and Giacomo Curlo completed a revision by 1461. While Piccolomini attributed flaws in Verge-

would probably have been spared much anguish."

⁷ See *Epist.*, 379-84; and Philip A. Stadter, "Arrianus, Flavius," *CTC* 3:3-6. In 1421, Giovanni Aurispa brought the first known Western manuscript of Arrian from the Orient to Rome. Smith, *Epist.*, lix-lx, speculates that Sigismund obtained a copy of that manuscript when he came to Rome in 1433 for his imperial coronation.

⁸ *Epist.*, 381-83. In a letter to Scipione Carteromacho in 1509, Giovanni Andrea Vergerio "Favonio" sought information about a *De gestis Sigismundi Regis Pannoniae* that Vergerio wrote. No trace of such a work has ever been found; see Smith, *Epist.*, lvii-lx.

⁹ *Epist.*, 383-84.

rio's translation to creeping senility, Facio bluntly claimed that Vergerio had gone mad in old age. An editor who publishes a new edition of a work must justify himself and rather naturally starts by pointedly criticizing the previous one.¹⁰

In addition to the translation, Vergerio also etched his mark upon the development of humanism in central and eastern Europe.¹¹ His peculiar approach reached young humanists in that region through his relationship with Ioannes Vitez (ca. 1408–1472). Vitez eventually obtained a number of Vergerio's books with his autograph glosses on Latin authors like Seneca and Lucan.¹² Whether through direct contact or through the mediation of the glossed manuscripts, Vergerio gave Vitez a model of Latin epistolary style and humanist textual philology and stoked his passion for classical authors, especially for Cicero. Vitez managed to disseminate those lessons when he became chancellor to King Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490), and the king rewarded Vitez for his sup-

¹⁰ For Piccolomini's judgment, see *Epist.*, 380n: "Paulus, ut videbis, senio confractus est et ad sepulchrum festinat." Facio included his analysis in a short biography of Vergerio (*ibid.*, 483): "Sub extremum vitae tempus mente captus est. . . ." Ludovico Odassi corrected the Facio-Curlo translation for the first printed edition at Pesaro in 1508. In 1575, at the request of Henricus Stephanus, Bonaventure de Smet prepared a new Latin version of the text and ridiculed the work of Facio and his team. See *ibid.*, 381n; and Stadter, "Arrianus," *CTC* 3:8, 15–17.

¹¹ Smith, *Epist.*, xxix–xxx, 388–90n, suggests that, shortly before his death in Buda, Vergerio may have met Gregorius Sanoceus (Gregorz z Sanoka / Gregor von Sanok), Ioannes Vitez (János / Ivan Vitéz), and Vitez's nephew Ianus Pannonius (Ivan Česmički), who mentioned Vergerio in his panegyric of Guarino. Filippo Buonaccorsi "Callimaco" claimed that Gregorius Sanoceus followed Vergerio's prose style (*ibid.*, 480): "Nam Paulus quidem oratione plurimum valebat. . . ." See further Eugenio Koltay-Kastner, "L'umanesimo italiano in Ungheria," *La Rinascita* 2 (1939): 12–24 (who alleged without offering any proof that Vergerio headed the royal chancery in Buda); Drazen Budiša, "Humanism in Croatia," in Albert Rabil, Jr., ed., *Humanism Beyond Italy*, vol. 2 of *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 282–84; Marianna D. Birnbaum, "Humanism in Hungary," in Albert Rabil, Jr., ed., *Humanism Beyond Italy*, vol. 2 of *Renaissance Humanism*, 295–99; and Ian Thomson, "The Scholar as Hero in Ianus Pannonius' Panegyric on Guarinus Veronensis," *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (1991): 197–98.

¹² See the important discoveries of Klára Csapodi-Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz, Studia Humanitatis: Veröffentlichungen der Arbeitsgruppe für Renaissanceforschung* 6 (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1984), 20–28. Csapodi-Gárdonyi posited a lengthy stay by Vergerio at Nagy-Várád (Grosswardein) sometime between 1437 and his death in 1444. She also feels that the manuscripts prove that Vergerio carried on some sort of official teaching activity during his years in imperial service. Nagy-Várád today lies in Romania and is called Oradea Mare. It is the capital and chief town of the Bihor district in northwestern Romania, approximately fourteen kilometers from the Hungarian frontier. In a letter written in 1445 that served as the prologue to his *Epistolario*, Vitez emphasized that Jerome and other holy doctors frequently cited the classical orators in their works; see Ioannes Vitéz de Zredna, *Opera quae supersunt*, Iván Boronkai, ed., *Bibliotheca scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum*, n.s., 3 (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1980), 31.

port in 1465 by naming him archbishop of Esztergom (Gran). In keeping with his dedication to humanist ideals, Vitez sent his nephew Ianus Pannonius to study under Guarino in Italy and further glossed the precious texts he had obtained from Vergerio. Some of those manuscripts consequently found their way into the magnificent library of Corvinus.¹³

In his spare time from official duties, Vergerio returned to exploring the communicative powers of humor. At the University of Bologna, around the age of twenty, Vergerio had written a Latin comedy in the style of Terence. The moral of his ribald plot emphasized that educators should concentrate on forming character. In his sixties, Vergerio transcribed a small group of *facetiae*, humorous anecdotes which reflected his concern for the "moral" of any good tale. The amusing stories func-

¹³ On paleographical grounds, namely the identity between the hand of Vergerio in cod. Marc. lat. XIV.54 (4328) and the hand that wrote the glosses, Csapodi-Gárdonyi assigned the following manuscripts to the library of Vergerio: 1) Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Tragoediae*, Oxford, Bodleian, cod. Auct. F.I.14 (2481.599); 2) Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Tragoediae*, Trent, Museo and Bibl. Nazionale, cod. W.43 (which she describes as an exact copy of the Oxford text including initials by the same artist; see Kristeller, *Iter* 6:232a-b, for clarification of errors in Csapodi-Gárdonyi's references); 3) Titus Livius, *Historiarum decades tres: I, III, IV.*, Vienna, Öst. Nationalbibliothek, cod. Lat. 3099; 4) Marcus Annaeus Lucanus, *Pharsalarum libri X*, *ibid.*, cod. Lat. 100 (according to the colophon on fol. 95, the codex was copied originally by Martino da Trieste in 1338); 5) Franciscus Maironis, *Quaestiones super I. libro Sententiarum*, *ibid.*, cod. Lat. 4792 (the identification of Vergerio's hand in this codex poses problems because the codex has a date of 1449 at the end; Csapodi-Gárdonyi therefore suggested that Vergerio may not have died in 1444 or, more likely, that the date was added later to the codex); 6) Misc. philosophica, Paris, Bibl. Nationale, cod. Lat. 6390 (glosses of Vergerio on fols. 69, 83, 93, 95); 7) Lopus Castelliunculus, *Allegationes abbreviatæ per Antonium de Butrio*, Gulielmus de Holborch, *Collectio conclusionum, determinationum et decisionum Rotæ ab anno 1376 usque ad annum 1381*, Vienna, Öst. Nationalbibliothek, cod. Lat. 4229 (glosses of Vergerio on fols. 3v, 5, 8, 11?); 8) *Grammatica Latina*, Budapest, University Library (Eötvös Loránd Tudomány Egyetem Könyvtára), cod. Lat. 23 (note of Vergerio on fol. 108). On historical grounds, namely the existence of codices in the library of Vitez or Corvinus that were originally written in Italy late in the fourteenth or early in the fifteenth century, some of which were returned to Hungary by the sultan of Turkey in 1877, she suggested that the following codices may also have come from Vergerio's library: 9) Albucasis, *Chirurgia*, translatio Latina Gerardus Cremonensis, Budapest, University Library, cod. Lat. 15; 10) Aristoteles, *Physica*, Averroes, *De substantia orbis*, *ibid.*, cod. Lat. 16; 11) Misc. philosophica, *ibid.*, cod. Lat. 17 (probably not from Vergerio's library since fol. 145v indicates a date of 5 September 1449); 12) Misc. humanistica (including several works of Cicero), *ibid.*, cod. Lat. 20; 12) Plutarchus, *Aristides et Cato Maior*, translatio Latina Franciscus Barbarus, *ibid.*, cod. Lat. 26. On the codices in the University Library of Budapest, see also Ladislav Mezey, *Codices Latini Medii Aevi Bibliothecae Universitatis Budapestinensis* (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1961), 34–37, 39, 41, 43. Vergerio's will made no mention of his books nor of Vitez. According to an early biographer (*Epist.*, 474–75), his books were numerous. For the books that Zabarella left to Vergerio, see Agostino Sottili, "La questione ciceroniana in una lettera di Francesco Zabarella a Francesco Petrarca (tav. IV)," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 6 (1973): 37–38.

tioned as an effective exordium, rendering the audience receptive to his ensuing invective against avarice and against the social structures which nurtured that vice. The stories and their settings took Vergerio on a journey backwards through the events and places of his life. The protagonists included an ingenuous peasant not unlike those whom Vergerio would have known from his childhood in Istria, a patrician and cobbler from the bourgeois and artisan strata of Venetian society, Bohemian and Polish residents from Sigismund's realm, and the charlatan Toscanello, who epitomized an academic form of hypocrisy against which Vergerio had inveighed throughout his career.

The plots of the anecdotes respect the straightforward narrative of the genre; Vergerio's comments on their meaning reveal the subtlety of good humor.¹⁴ In one story, a Venetian patrician contrives to find out if a cobbler in his *sestiere* is as content as he appears to be. The patrician has observed that the cobbler earns just enough money to support his wife and himself in a tiny home; despite great wealth, the patrician finds himself driven to acquire ever greater sums of money. Out of curiosity, therefore, the patrician decides to see if happiness is really inversely proportional to wealth. He leaves a cache of gold where he knows that only the cobbler will find it. Alas, the patrician is doubly disappointed by the results. Initially, to the patrician's satisfaction, the cobbler resists the urge to take the gold, but his noble resolve weakens. After he snatches the treasure, he lives the rest of his life in mortal fear of losing it. The patrician ruins the cobbler's life and, in the process, loses his gold and his illusions about the virtuous poor.¹⁵

In another story, Vergerio focused again upon the theme of avarice, exploring the ways in which a capitalist system of commercial exchange preyed on weak individuals who succumb to the vice. The plot exploited the reputation of Bohemians for cleverness and Poles for naiveté. In the anecdote, a Bohemian tricks a Pole into allowing him to take the

¹⁴ *Epist.*, 384–95, 452–53. Poggio Bracciolini included the story of the charlatan doctor (#203) in the *Facetiae* he published in 1452; Vergerio and Poggio may have originally heard the account at a gathering of humanists at the Papal Court. The story of the peasant is much older and has been traced by some scholars to the Talmud. On the genre in the Renaissance, see Barbara C. Bowen, "Renaissance Collections of *Facetiae*, 1344–1528: A New Listing," *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986): 1–3, 263.

¹⁵ *Epist.*, 452–53: "Intervenit ille, aurum offendit; haeret primum stupidus, / ut qui nihil huiusmodi tale speraret, sed nequivit tandem pravis opinionibus ingeneratum hominibus errorem continenter frenare. Itaque circumspicit si quis eum viderit; qui, cum neminem adesse intellexisset, aurum rapit, domum raptim proficiscitur, homines, bruta, parentes ipsos pertimescit, ac ne uxori quidem propalare id audet."

Pole's hat by using a single word whose meaning changes in their respective languages. Vergerio used the anecdote to denounce the practice of bankers who deceive their clients by concealing their usurious practices under another name. He found it reprehensible to prey upon the ingenuous through such ruses; the essence of loaning money at interest did not change whether one called himself a usurer (*usurara*) or an exchanger (*cambius*). As an adolescent, Vergerio had decided that he could not reconcile the merchant's unbridled pursuit of profit with the liberal arts. Now he specifically censured commercial bankers, who had transformed "the most honorable arts into the most vile service, the love of wisdom into the love of silver, oratory into money-changing, and Greek letters themselves into letters of exchange." Their guilt was compounded by willful deception.¹⁶

In the 1430s, Vergerio incorporated two anecdotes into a letter to Ioannes de Dominis, the bishop of Segna (Zengg, Senj) in Croatia.¹⁷ The first dealt with Toscanello, who masquerades as a doctor because that profession offers the greatest reward to a swindler. All human beings wish to enjoy good health, but almost none have the training to judge a doctor's ability. Medical diagnoses, even those by the best physicians, had an inherent element of uncertainty. No doctor succeeded in 100 percent of the cases he treated, and the most reliable often disagreed about proper therapies. Patients were well named: they entrusted themselves to a physician's care in the hopes of a cure over time. If the cure failed, no one really knew if the doctor were to blame. And doctors almost always reaped a handsome profit for their efforts. Only the upstanding character of the physician could guarantee against potential abuses. Toscanello invents a scheme to exploit those realities. He first combs medical textbooks and records individual therapies on small cards, and then he presents himself as a physician to unsuspecting peasants. To attract patients, he offers his services at lower rates than those

¹⁶ Ibid., 387: "Itaque sub appellatione cambii eo negotio tamquam licito palam et absque rubore utuntur, nomine tamen non re mutata. In hoc quoque parum iusti, campsores nomen, quod damnati faenoris est appellatio, in honesti operis nomen cambire studuerunt. Quod genus lucri ab imperitis fieri forsitan potest; ab iis vero qui, et Graece et Latine magna parte professi, morali philosophiae diutius insudarunt, qua non dico venia sed qua patientia ferri valeat non satis intelligo. Nam honestissimae quidem artes in vilissimum ministerium, philosophiam in philargyriam, oratoriam in nummulariam, ipsasque Graecas litteras, mutato studio, in litteras quas dicunt cambii, per malum cambium converterunt."

¹⁷ Smith, *Epist.*, xxix, 388n. The letter dates from 1432–36. De Dominis became bishop of Nagy-Várád in 1440 and was killed by the Turks at the battle of Varna in November of 1444, where King Ladislas III of Poland and the papal legate Giuliano Cesarini also died.

that local doctors charge. When an individual seeks his advice, he first insists on payment. Then, as he reaches into his bag of cards, he urges the trusting sufferer "to ask God that something good come out."¹⁸ He selects a remedy purely by chance and tells the patient to follow the stated regime. The cure generally has no effect, and on occasion it actually makes things worse. Yet there are also rare instances where the remedy effects the desired cure. Whatever the outcome, Toscanello prospers as he has anticipated.

Vergerio paired that account with another involving a dimwitted peasant who goes to great lengths to ingratiate himself with his lord. The peasant knows the lord's taste for young figs and uses manure on the fig trees to quicken the maturation process. When the peasant samples the figs from those trees, however, he discovers to his dismay that he has only succeeded in ruining their natural flavor. Undaunted, he fills a basket by mixing the immature figs with others fit for consumption. Upon tasting the figs, the lord quickly realizes that many are not ripe. Annoyed at the peasant's attempts to manipulate a reliable process of nature, he devises a lighthearted punishment worthy of the foolish crime. While the lord eats the few figs that have ripened, he amuses himself by bouncing the unripe ones off the peasant's head. The dimwitted peasant can only offer a prayer of thanks that his master loves figs and not peaches, which, given their solid pit, would make a much greater impact.¹⁹

All four stories illustrate that, late in life, Vergerio appreciated the restiveness of the human heart. Human beings are rarely satisfied with their material possessions, nor are they inclined to acknowledge the limits of their capacities. No matter how much or how little one had, one tended to want more. The cobbler and the peasant had proven just as avaricious as the Venetian patrician. Moreover, Vergerio lamented the ways in which the structures of society preyed on the weakness of individuals who easily give in to avarice. Both the peasant in the countryside and the cobbler in Venice succumbed to that vice. The peasant foolishly sought to hasten natural processes, while the cobbler miserably hoarded

¹⁸ *Epist.*, 392: "'Pete,' aiebat, 'a Deo, ut bonum tibi eveniat.'" The practice of medicine in the later Middle Ages included complex recipes for drug therapy. See John M. Riddle, "Theory and Practice in Medieval Medicine," *Viator* 5 (1974): 170-83; and Nancy G. Siraisi, *Taddeo Alderotti and His Pupils: Two Generations of Italian Medical Learning* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), 269-302.

¹⁹ *Epist.*, 392: "'Laus Deo, quod persica non fuere quae detuli!'"

his bonanza. For Vergerio, the most blatant case of preying upon human weakness was usury. Those with little or no capital placed themselves in a state of greater dependency by going into debt. Changing the name from usury to exchange only added hypocrisy to the bankers' sins of manipulation.

Among the characters, Toscanello manipulated human gullibility in the most cynical fashion. When approached as a business, no activity guaranteed surer profits than treating the ill: doctors never lack for patients. Having chosen to exploit the art of healing, which supplied almost risk-free ways of defrauding others, Toscanello duped the less sophisticated members of his society. His breach of trust for the sake of quick enrichment perverted a noble profession, whose members swore a solemn oath to heal human suffering. Ever the moral educator, Vergerio saw Toscanello as epitomizing the hypocrisy of many who pretended to be learned. He had left matters to chance rather than skill and richly profitted by doing so.

In old age, Vergerio continued to insist on the necessity of training human genius in those arts which had a moral purpose. Beneath their wit, the anecdotes are pessimistic about human nature. Humans even make language, a tool for communication, serve their nefarious ends. The sophistry of the Bohemian, who twists the meaning of words in order to steal from a naive Pole, symbolized for Vergerio the slick ways of bankers. They use their intelligence to appropriate the meager savings of unsuspecting clients, and all is done in legal fashion. Rather than challenge their students to recognize the ways in which social structures preyed upon human weakness, educators often try to assure that their students find remunerative employment within those structures. Vergerio was forced to admit that human beings had notable capacities to deceive others—and themselves. Yet all was not in vain.

Vergerio claimed that Toscanello and the peasant were really unwitting geniuses, whose insight supplied an antidote for the restlessness of the human spirit. Before choosing a cure, Toscanello instructs his patients to ask God for what they needed. Likewise, the peasant has the sound instinct to thank God for what he has received. There was too much surety and smugness in the world for Vergerio's liking.

Whence come such great vicissitudes [in our lives]? They do not result from the state of affairs themselves, which basically remain the same or at least are not easily transformed even by the most profound alterations. We ourselves are the source of inconstancy,

for we look upon realities in vain as darkness covers our eyes and we inquire into truth as though feeling about blindly. When dealing with uncertain matters, we cannot keep ourselves from exercising our powers of judgment for what we consider right, even when impelled by ambiguous or weak reasons; in those cases, as is only right, we are very often mistaken. Therefore, the sayings of each of those two characters warn us not to rely on ourselves; rather, let us ask that he who does not know how to err direct our path and let us pray for good things for ourselves from the one who is entirely good and goodness itself.²⁰

Vergerio decried the destructive effects of self-pity; human ignorance (*imbecillitas*) identified suffering as something intrinsically evil. Be grateful that God did not allow greater suffering: though figs may hurt, they never cause the pain of peaches.

Vergerio's recommendations eventually reached one of his lifelong friends, the Venetian Niccolò Leonardi. In letters exchanged over the course of forty years, Niccolò and Vergerio had shared the intimate experiences of their private lives.²¹ Niccolò once wrote to Vergerio to inform him of the birth of a son, and Vergerio immediately responded to express his joy, claiming that he felt like a second father to the boy. A few years later, after Niccolò had built a house on Murano, Vergerio warned him not to spend too much on the house and jeopardize the possibility of a liberal education for their son. When Vergerio learned of

²⁰ Ibid., 394: "Unde, quæso, hæc? Unde tanta varietas? Non ex rebus ipsis est, quæ eadem manent aut non facile tanta mutatione variantur, sed ex nobis, qui quasi per cribrum oculis caligantibus res intuemur, et veritatem veluti palpantibus manibus inquirimus, ac, de rebus incertis per rationes ambiguas parumque solidas impuls, movemur ad recte iudicandum; in quo iudicio, ut æquum est, frequentissime fallimur. Quamobrem utriusque verbis monemur non confidere de nobis, sed ab eo petamus dirigi, qui nescit errare, atque ab eo ipso, qui totus bonus est et ipsum bonum est, nobis bona precemur, illud insuper sentientes, sine quo superior ratio parum valet, ut nonnisi bona existimemus quaecumque dederit ille, qui mala dare non potest. Quod si hoc admittere nostra imbecillitas non sustinet, sed mala iudicat quaecumque molestæ sunt, gratias saltem agamus divinae bonitati, quod peiora prohibuit et maiore nos molestia turbari non permisit."

²¹ Ibid., 303-4, 307-8, 311-12; Marcello Zicari, "Il più antico codice di lettere di P. Paolo Vergerio il vecchio," *Studia Oliveriana* 2 (1954): 54-55; and Vittorio Zaccaria, "Niccolò Leonardi, i suoi corrispondenti e una lettera inedita di Pier Paolo Vergerio," *Atti e memorie della Accademia di scienze, lettere ed arti in Padova*, n.s., 95 (1982-83): 96-110. On Niccolò, see also Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), 62-63, 387-89; and Tiziana Pesenti, *Professori e promotori di medicina nello Studio di Padova dal 1405 al 1509: Repertorio bio-bibliografico*, Contributi alla storia dell'Università di Padova 16 (Padua: Centro per la storia dell'Università, and Trieste: LINT, 1984), 125-27.

the death of Niccolò's mother, he quickly wrote to express his solidarity and offer Niccolò consolation for his loss. In a different vein, Vergerio later sent Niccolò a gift of small razors, joking about his magnanimous generosity and the appropriateness of Tartar blades for one like Niccolò with a round face and light beard.

Given those long years of friendship, Vergerio must have felt an especially keen anguish when he read a letter that Niccolò sent him in 1437. After several years of silence, Niccolò wrote to say that he had seen a copy of Vergerio's anecdotes about Toscanello and the peasant, and they had brought him a measure of solace at a most difficult juncture. Niccolò then listed the ways in which adverse fortune had assaulted the fortress of his resolve. His son Eustachio had contracted a fatal illness shortly after arriving in Corfù to assume the prestigious position of archbishop. Niccolò's only other son, Giovanni, had already pronounced vows in a religious order, leaving Niccolò to cope with the family's expenses, especially his daughters' dowries. As if matters were not already difficult enough, Niccolò had been blind for several years and needed someone to lead him by the hand wherever he went.²² In old age, therefore, Niccolò found himself deprived of the possibility of reading, his most cherished form of relaxation. Niccolò concluded by committing himself to Vergerio's therapy: despite suffering, he would place his trust in God. Vergerio left no response to his friend's poignant account. Throughout his career, he had shown special appreciation for the power of the visible; he had to be moved upon hearing that his friend had lost his sight. Although Vergerio would find a measure of satisfaction in envisioning Niccolò's laughter as someone read the humorous anecdotes to him, he must also have gathered a chilling sense of the difficulty in attaining interior freedom, which he had upheld as an ideal throughout his life.

After the death of Sigismund in 1437, Vergerio apparently retired from political life. Later biographers suggested that he had taken refuge in the household of the bishop of Nagy-Várad or in a monastery; his will, however, was written "in the stove-room of his own house" in

²² *Epist.*, 397: "Itaque, cum petissem Romam, hac virtutum suarum fama Corcirensis archiepiscopatum sibi facile nactus sum, quem eodem adiit tempore et mortem obiit. Fuit ille quidem casus mihi acerbus, atrocior vero hic qui extemplo illum secutus est. Nam ego postquam e Roma redii, oculis Dei digito captus octo iam annis nihil cerno nec eo sensu penitus utor, sed si quo progredior, duce mihi opus est, qui manibus et trahat et regat. Ita senex calamitosus caecus sedeo, solatio etiam lectionis, cum solus sum, quae me plurimum delectabatur, privatus."

Buda.²³ When Vergerio's biographers tried to fill in the picture of his last years, they tended to cast him in the image of his hero Jerome. One author insisted that Vergerio spent those years composing and translating the lives of the church fathers; Jerome had likewise written a series of biographies of early Christian monks.²⁴ A second biographer posited close psychological ties between Vergerio and Jerome, which he traced to their common origins in the region of Istria and their common dedication to eloquence. No one should be surprised, therefore, that Vergerio spent the last years of his life in Buda living as though he were a hermit.²⁵ In the seventeenth century, an anonymous biographer, perhaps Bartolomeo Petronio, carried that identification to its logical conclusion. He claimed that, after the emperor's death, Vergerio entered a monastery in Buda belonging to the Congregation of the Apostolic Friars of Saint Jerome (*Gesuati*). Historians have treated the biographer's report with warranted skepticism: the *Gesuati* had no monastery in Buda at that time.²⁶

How did Vergerio approach death? Were he true to his ideals, he would confront death in the spirit of a Stoic Christian. Vergerio had

²³ Smith, *Epist.*, xxix–xxx, 473, 477. For the reference to Vergerio's house, see *ibid.*, 468: "in stupha domus habitationis dicti testatoris. . . ." The relevant bishops of Nagy-Várád were Ioannes de Cursola, O.M., (1435, d. 1440) and Ioannes de Dominis (1440, d. 1444); see Csapodi-Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Vitéz*, 21–22, who feels certain that Vergerio spent time with Ioannes Vitez and Ioannes de Dominis in Nagy-Várád.

²⁴ Anon., "Vita," *Epist.*, 475: "vitas etiam nonnullorum sanctorum patrum in Latinum versas, ediditque alia." The biography was written sometime between 1444 and 1447 and was based upon information supplied by Petrus Paulus De Buionis, the notary for Vergerio's will. As payment for his services, De Buionis received from Vergerio's estate a purse (*scarsella*), a warmer (*caldaria*), and a tray (*scutella*). More memorably, he brought a camel back from Hungary, which Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini had captured from the Turks and sent to Pope Eugene IV.

²⁵ Anon., "Vita," *Epist.*, 477–78. The biographer adduces two separate sources for his information. First, a "brother" of Vergerio told Guarino of those circumstances: "Cum essem iis diebus Veronae, offendi illic quendam fratrem Vergerii. Paulum incolumem, tametsi esset in ultima vitae senectute, et esse apud Budam tamquam in eremo dicebat." Smith identifies the relative as Vergerio de' Vergerii, son of Simone and administrator of Vergerio's possessions in Capodistria. The second source was Ianus Pannonius: "et pervenit iuxta Budam, [et] accepit, dum confabularetur cum quibusdam viris illius civitatis, ibi esse doctissimum virum Italicum in eremo commorantem, unde ilico adivit ipsum." The author himself therefore concludes: "Itaque optimus philosophus et religiosissimus fuit eorum qui vivebant in eremo." The author also notes that Vergerio, like Jerome, had suffered persecution at the hands of Roman clerics due to his invectives against their immoral behavior (*ibid.*, 478). Beyond the fact that he was a student of Guarino, nothing more is known of the author's identity.

²⁶ Bartolomeo Petronio?, "Compendio della vita di Pier Paolo Vergerio," *Epist.*, 473: "Cum se iam annosum et senio confectum intelligeret, vitae contemplativae se dedicans Iesuatorum saeptis se clausit. . . ."

once begun to compose a dialogue on death and immortality, which he modeled upon Pseudo Seneca's *De remediis fortuitorum*. In the fragment of the text that exists, Vergerio candidly admitted that the thought of death caused him fear, but that fear ultimately made no sense. Why fear what one cannot avoid? The fear of death only makes life miserable and in no way changes the fact that we will die. The best therapy, therefore, lay in reflecting soberly on death's inescapable reality.²⁷ On 3 May 1444, sensing the imminence of his own death, Vergerio composed his will. Buried within the legal wording of the document, Vergerio intimated how final his separation from family and Italy had become. In disposing of his possessions, Vergerio left one hundred gold florins to "a poor relative from his patrilineage, if such a person could still be found alive." Absence made his heart grow fonder for Italy; he named two Italians as executors, the Florentine Manetto Ammannatini (1384–1450) and the Roman cardinal Giuliano Cesarini (1389–1444). Ammannatini had emigrated to Hungary in 1409 and was then employed at the royal court. Cesarini had come to the empire as the papal legate for the crusade against the Turks and would be killed in the battle of Varna just a few months later.²⁸ According to the best evidence, in early July of 1444, Vergerio died at his home in Buda. If his wishes were heeded, he was buried in the Dominican church of Saint Nicholas. Today, only the Gothic bell tower of the church still stands within the enclosure of the fortress. Vergerio's grave has been lost together with much of the material evidence from his years in imperial service.

²⁷ *Epist.*, 308–10, 445–46. Vergerio wrote three consolatory letters: to Giovanni da Bologna for the death of Santo de' Pellegrini (*ibid.*, 183); to Niccolò Leonardi for the death of his mother (*ibid.*, 303–4); and to Guglielmo da Ravenna for the death of his son (*ibid.*, 308–10). According to an autograph gloss, Vergerio was extremely ill and almost died in 1440; see Csapodi-Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Vitéz*, 26, who cites Budapest, University Library, cod. Lat. 23, fol. 108 (plate 83): "A. d. MCCCCXL fui infirmus ad mortem quod numquam talem autem infirmitatem fui passus."

²⁸ PPV, *Testamentum, Epist.*, 463–71. An Orsola de' Vergerii, the daughter of Domenico, inherited a considerable sum from Vergerio's possessions. For the executors, see Csapodi-Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Vitéz*, 22–23, 28; and Alfred A. Srnad and Katherine Walsh, "Cesarini, Giuliano," *DBI* 24:194.

Conclusion

Pierpaolo Vergerio the elder gave important new directions to the humanist movement and thus supplied leadership to the bold group of Italian humanists, who early in the fifteenth century constituted themselves an avant-garde.¹ The humanists of the third generation—Vergerio, Leonardo Bruni, Niccolò Niccoli, Poggio Bracciolini, Antonio Loschi—pressed adherents of the movement to focus upon five social concerns. First, they deflected humanists from any temptation toward a demagogic politics. Seeing man as political by nature, they advocated a politics that

¹ For the characterization of Vergerio's generation as avant-garde, see E. H. Gombrich, "From the Revival of Letters to the Reform of the Arts: Niccolò Niccoli and Filippo Brunelleschi," in *The Heritage of Apelles: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1976), 93–110. Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogi*, which he dedicated to Vergerio, have rightly been seen as that generation's manifesto for humanism. See, e.g., Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955; rev. ed., 1966), 225–69, 512–14; Hans Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political Literature* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968), 102–37; Jerrold E. Seigel, "'Civic Humanism' or Ciceronian Rhetoric? The Culture of Petrarch and Bruni," *Past and Present*, no. 34 (July 1966): 9–28; Eugenio Garin, "Ritratto di Leonardo Bruni Aretino," *Atti e memorie della Accademia Petrarca di lettere, arti e scienze*, n.s., 40 (1970–72): 6–12; Neal W. Gilbert, "The Early Italian Humanists and Disputation," in Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, eds., *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron* (Florence: Sansoni, and De Kalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1971), 203–26; David Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 35 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), 24–37; Quentin Skinner, *The Renaissance*, vol. 1 of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), 80; David Quint, "Humanism and Modernity: A Reconsideration of Bruni's *Dialogues*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 431–42; and Lars Boje Mortensen, "Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogus*: A Ciceronian Debate on the Literary Culture of Florence," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 37 (1986): 259–85.

was serviceable to the needs of bourgeois oligarchs.² Within that governing elite, however, individuals of talent must always be free to articulate their views and win positions of responsibility. Strict standards of Ciceronian Latinity would assure the exclusive nature of the elite, whereas honest expression of ideas through Latin oratory would identify those worthy of advancement.

Secondly, to prepare the governing elite for their role in political society, those humanists developed an educational program which underlined the importance of their disciplines and distanced itself from the Aristotelian curriculum of Europe's universities. A humanist education would begin during adolescence, stress different disciplines, and prepare students to fulfill their role as citizens of the civic community. Central to the success of such an education were its emphases on forming character and mastering rhetoric. The two were closely related: no politician could hope to engender consensus among the governed if he did not live the values that he advocated publicly.

Thirdly, the generation of Bruni and Vergerio wanted humanists to appropriate fully the rhetorical culture of antiquity. As an art, rhetoric primarily taught one success in public speaking; its applications to literary and visual expression were secondary. Fourthly, while those humanists pressed for proficiency in rhetoric, they increasingly followed the lead of recent visual artists. Painters and sculptors had revolutionized artistic expression by ignoring contemporary conventions and by imitating ancient ones. In addition, they had proven how effective sight was in persuading human beings. The orator's primary goal, then, became that of portraying in words the very "face of virtue." In all of their activities, finally, humanists of the third generation had to confront the censure of clerics in Italy, who suggested that the movement's adherents had abandoned their faith in a blind rush to embrace the culture of ancient pagans.

Vergerio emerged as a leader of the humanist movement because he offered creative responses to all five of the challenges that his generation faced. Though his political convictions matured and were always marked by a sense of pragmatism, they remained elitist. His family believed that they had survived the turbulent years of the War of Chioggia because a member of the heavenly elite had proven a generous patron

² Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 191-201.

for them. To attain worthy political goals of reintegration and order, one needed a powerful patron to work his influence downward into the wider body politic. Vergerio received his political education in the last decade of the fourteenth century during the wars triggered by the aggressive policies of Giangaleazzo Visconti. Those wars further convinced him of the dangerous myopia of demagogic politics. The small despotisms of northern Italy, blinded by a fury to expand their territorial control, often invited the participation of greater powers in their petty struggles. By looking only to local concerns and by rallying popular support through wars of conquest, the despots had planted the seeds of their own destruction.

Like his patron Jerome, Vergerio had developed an intuitive sense of a *res publica litterarum*. In that republic of farsighted citizens, there would be an emphasis on classical Latin and on Ciceronian oratory. Vergerio's letter to Petrarch in the name of Cicero revealed his close psychological association with the Roman champion of free speech within the governing elite. It also marked his clearest public advocacy of pragmatism in public life: Cicero had adapted his judgments on the warlords of his day in keeping with the evolution of their politics. However, he had refused to sit silently by in comfortable retirement when Mark Anthony sought to establish a tyranny that would suppress the freedom of expression which constituted a fundamental right for Rome's elite. Cicero had defended a republican system of government that restricted power to an elite (the Senate) within a dominant class (the patriciate). Vergerio praised the wisdom of Venice's constitutional order precisely for filtering the control of the Great Council into a smaller Senate. The Venetian model had a further advantage in that membership in the Great Council was defined by law, not by birth. The Great Council could and did expand, and the Venetian Senate, a smaller body, could always consult more widely, as the Roman Senate had done through the institution of the *contio*.³ Vergerio recommended humanist oratory to the rulers of his day because that oratory protected the state from two political extremes. First, it eliminated the temptation toward demagogic populism because it was understood only by an elite trained in classical Latin expression. Moreover, in its free and responsible exercise, it prevented any member of the elite from seizing dictatorial control of government.

³ Arnaldo Momigliano, "La libertà di parola nel mondo antico," *Rivista storica italiana* 83 (1971): 521.

Vergerio's evaluation of the Carrara regime in Padua likewise betrayed the fundamentally elitist character of his political ideas. A despotism like that of the Carrara maintained its political legitimacy as long as the members of the regime fulfilled their governing obligations. The governors had to act as beneficent patrons toward the commoners of the Paduan state, extending their largesse to foster the well-being and harmony of the state. Moreover, the governing elite had an obligation to repress factionalism within the dominant class. In all political activities, the despot must maintain a severe regard for legality: being a member of the elite did not give one the license to choose with impunity an arbitrary course of action. At any given moment, the regime could measure its success against the harmony of the elite and the contentment of the broader populace. In matters of foreign policy, the Carrara had best served Padua when they had seen their state as a participant in controversies that involved greater and lesser powers. Surrendering a measure of control to a greater regional power might in the end be wiser than engaging in a hopeless struggle against that regional power. In his political writings, Vergerio declared the character of the ruler more important than the structure of government. He was willing to serve in a monarchy or a republic, and not only because he hoped that some government might pay his living expenses. His emphasis on character, moreover, made his potential role as an educator of the elite that much more appealing. A good prince often produced mediocre offspring who needed a sound education if they were to have any hope of overcoming their defects of character. For Vergerio, a bourgeois sense of internal worth predominated over any aristocracy of birth. One should earn a governing role by proving commitment to virtue in deed.

There is no question that Vergerio devised an original approach to a humanist education. His creativity had a solid grounding in his own personal experience. From his earliest days as a university tutor in dialectic, Vergerio had sensed a need to reorient education. While valuing logic as a tool for rational argumentation, Vergerio did not accept logic as a basis for all future studies. Scholastic logic directed students toward a purely intellectual training and lacked the moral emphasis that Vergerio deemed essential.⁴ Vergerio further decried a lack of flexibility in university programs. He began to elaborate an alternative in the *Paulus*,

⁴ Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York and London: Teachers College Press, 1986), 67.

where he traced a path between two extremes. Educators must not offer rigid norms without attention to individual character and experience, but they must not impart a sense of freedom as the license to do whatever one felt like doing. Genuine freedom was responsible and best revealed itself in the art of "good and holy living,"⁵ an art which required training and then practice. Vergerio also capitalized on his knowledge of classical sources. After he had studied Greek with Manuel Chrysoloras, he became aware that Pseudo Plutarch had written a treatise on the education of children. Vergerio crafted his own program for adolescents. He thereby tied the educational program to the process of maturation. He felt that it was especially important to stress the formation of character in adolescence, when one discovered for the first time the power of libido.

Already in 1396, Vergerio had reached firm conclusions about the best way to form character in the adolescent sons of the political elite. In letters to a friend, Ludovico Buzzacarini, he underlined the importance of a trio of subjects useful for public life—moral philosophy, history, and rhetoric. All three fell squarely within the purview of humanists. Moral philosophy prescribed norms for proper behavior, history illustrated the success or failure of human beings in adhering to those norms, and rhetoric supplied the skill to persuade others of their importance. Once conceptualized, Vergerio gave that trio a central role in his treatise on humanist education, *De ingenuis moribus*. Historians rightly see that subcurriculum for political life as one of the treatise's most ingenious elements. Within that trio, moreover, Vergerio drew upon his previous political experience and assigned a place of preeminence to rhetoric. In his earliest efforts to win Carrara patronage, Vergerio had attempted to use oratory as his passport to public service. When one compares the sermons and speeches that Vergerio composed at Padua in the last decade of the fourteenth century with those of his contemporaries, it is clear that he had adopted an innovative approach to public speaking. His panegyrics for Jerome provoked negative reactions among traditionalists; Vergerio admitted to abandoning the thematic form and concomitant logical emphases of preaching customary in his day. His funeral oration for Francesco da Carrara il Vecchio in 1393 easily distinguishes itself from the sermons of Francesco Zabarella and Giovanni Ludovico Lambertazzi because Vergerio again disregarded the thematic form of

⁵ Cicero *Off.* 1.6.19.

preaching. He chose to follow ancient norms for panegyric and to exploit the power of the visible in arousing pathos among his listeners.

Through public speeches, Vergerio sought to make the political significance of impressive spectacles clear to those who understood his classicizing medium. All could see the outpouring of grief at the burial of Francesco da Carrara. When Vergerio described the crowd of mourners in attendance, he arranged them according to a proper class structure. By following classical principles and classical models to craft his praise, Vergerio thereby introduced a potentially radical dimension into a fundamentally conservative enterprise.⁶ As his preferred weapon, he wielded the principle of ethos in a Roman sense. Societal leaders should be measured against the values that they themselves advocate. The principle acquired a sharp edge in proportion to the rigidity of a society's hierarchy. The more entrenched the elite, the more menacing the principle that they are accountable for living the values they sanction. Status becomes meaningless; only deeds count. Rather than attack the structures of society, humanists praised or censured the behavior of the governing elite.

Vergerio's experience in composing orations for important civic and religious rituals in Padua led him to distinguish his own style of humanism from that of the movement's founder, Francesco Petrarca. Whereas Petrarch preferred the poet's solitude of the Vacluse, Vergerio desired to be an orator active in the public square of the city-state. He opted for a more integral commitment to ancient rhetorical culture. When Carlo Malatesta destroyed a statue of Virgil in 1397, Vergerio used the occasion to prosecute Carlo before the bar of learned opinion. He shaped the invective as an appeal to recover the political dimension of the rhetorical culture of antiquity: Carlo's attack on Virgil represented an attack on Cicero as well. Humanists could legitimately pursue the composition of poetry, but the movement would never achieve a full mirroring of classical standards unless its orators spoke out in public. In his theoretical writings, Vergerio argued for a restoration of the traditional opportunities for public speaking, in his day restricted only to the ceremonial occasions of the epideictic genre. He also offered Cicero as the single model for those who aspired to success in public speaking, and he stressed decorum in style and substance, shunning the excesses of

⁶ Maurizio Bettini, *Antropologia e cultura romana: Parentela, tempo, immagini dell'anima* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1986), 129-31.

Asianism in favor of the sobriety of Atticism.⁷ In effect, Vergerio redefined the social role of a humanist intellectual: he was not simply to be a scholar or poet but rather an important actor in the political life of Italy's republics and despotisms.

Once employed at the Papal Court in 1405, Vergerio began to practice what for years he had preached. In 1406, he spoke before Pope Innocent VII and the nobles of the Roman commune as he attempted to reconcile them after the violence of the previous year. A few weeks later, Vergerio prodded Innocent to address critical problems affecting the Roman Church. When Vergerio delivered a panegyric of Jerome to the Papal Court, he emphasized Jerome's mastery of pagan learning and his ability to tame a lion, the wildest of beasts. The pope would do well to repudiate the relentless attacks that censorious clerics like Giovanni Dominici launched against humanism. Likewise, the pope should emulate Jerome by approaching his rival claimant in Avignon with the same sort of kindness and patience that yielded such dramatic results with the lion. After Innocent died without resolving the Schism, Vergerio unleashed the full force of his invective to castigate the Roman cardinals for their repeated failings and to convince them to delay in electing a successor to Innocent. Vergerio's ardor for church reform had been stoked through his personal conversations with Bernardino da Siena. He denounced the hypocrisy of the Roman clergy: the pope never acted on his promises to meet his Avignonese rival and the cardinals never adhered to their oath to resign if elected pope.

To highlight those transgressions, Vergerio painted a portrait of primitive Christianity, in which the mores of early churchmen appear in sharp contrast to those of clerics in Vergerio's day. What little the early Christians possessed, which included no silver or gold, was held in common for the benefit of all. In keeping with his emphasis on character, Vergerio traced the roots of the Schism to personal vices prevalent among the Church's leaders. Ambitious and avaricious, the higher clergy had enriched themselves and ignored the needs of the people of God. Despite the urgency of his plea, Vergerio failed to convince the cardinals to delay their election. Two years later, in 1408, he tried to use his panegyric of Jerome to effect a change of heart in the new pontiff,

⁷ Marcello Aurigemma, *Studi sulla cultura letteraria fra Tre e Quattrocento* (Filippo Villani, Vergerio, Bruni) (Rome: Bulzoni, 1976), 68–73; and Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, Michael Mooney, ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979), 220.

Gregory XII. Once again he painted a portrait of Jerome as a champion of humanist learning and a model of Christian detachment. Yet Gregory clung to his authority, and, a year later, Vergerio abandoned the Papal Court in disgust. One last time, in 1421, he would speak publicly in an effort to foster reconciliation, on that occasion between Catholics and Hussites in the reign of Sigismund. He sought to make the parties see how much they had in common; even their division over receiving communion from the chalice might be resolved through compromise and understanding, without legislating uniformity of practice. Less tolerant voices, however, prevailed.

In virtually all of those speeches, Vergerio characteristically tried to capitalize on the power of the visible. His lifetime of humanist activity had taught him that the visual evoked a more powerful emotional response than the purely cerebral.⁸ Each time he returned to his hometown of Capodistria, depending on whether he approached by sea or land, he saw a distinct difference in character. From the sea, one observed the admirable qualities of the town, its healthy environment and potential for civic harmony. By land, however, one obtained a less attractive perspective, crossing a fetid swamp whose infected air symbolized the factionalism of Capodistria at its violent worst. When Vergerio wrote his first classicizing orations in Padua, he exploited the power of the visible. To commemorate the restoration of Francesco Novello to power, Vergerio contrasted the devastation wrought on Padua by its Visconti conquerors to the flourishing character of the city-state under Carrara rule. In reviewing the assembled mourners at the funeral of Francesco il Vecchio, Vergerio rendered the structure of the city-state visible, with its most powerful elements gathered directly behind the bier of Carrara leadership. The elite signaled their intent to follow the worthy policies of Francesco il Vecchio, which Vergerio then explained, lest anyone, especially Francesco Novello, forget them.

Vergerio's persistent interest in urban culture and government received literary expression in a series of projected treatises on specific cities: Capodistria, Rome, Venice, and Florence. Even the notes for those unfinished works establish that Vergerio intended to start from the visual evidence of site and topography and then proceed to the more

⁸ John W. O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 3 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1979), 62-67, esp. 63.

subtle structures of government and constitutional order. From his childhood, he distinctly remembered the pleasing setting and harmonious civic life of Cividale del Friuli. He professed abiding convictions that, were a city's site well chosen and its edifices well constructed, then its government would function smoothly. The arts of building and governing were related, and the choices made had strategic, economic, and ethical consequences. In responding to the destruction of Virgil's statue in 1397, Vergerio displayed stronger repugnance than did the other humanists who responded to the crime. Vergerio alone emphasized the inspirational power of a visible monument and ridiculed the purported piety of fanatics who were then destroying precious items in Italy's artistic patrimony. Their actions manifested a bigotry hardly in keeping with the values of a church whose highest ideals were professedly catholic. Just a year later, in 1398, Vergerio felt a deep sense of shame when he saw the condition of the city of Rome. The city's decrepit physical condition, constantly exacerbated by the reckless pillaging of ancient monuments, mirrored a deeper moral corruption. When Vergerio later served the popes in Rome, he realized that he must assign ultimate blame for the corruption to the popes; they had placed their own prestige before the needs of the community and become blind to the degradation of their see.

Throughout his life, Vergerio found inspiration for his provocative convictions in the work of visual artists. He exalted Giotto as genuinely avant-garde and as the appropriate standard for excellence among painters in his own day. Likewise, Vergerio sought to become an avant-garde orator by adhering to the standard of excellence set by Cicero. The visual arts helped Vergerio to clarify his educational goals in his seminal treatise on humanist education. Admiring sculptors who left the roughing out of a first design to the stonecutters, Vergerio preferred that grammarians fulfill the essential but less stimulating task of assuring that students could read and write the Latin language correctly. Then the humanists would polish that rough material into works of art—students skilled in the humanities. As an ideal, Vergerio proposed that educators help students to see the very face of virtue itself. He also gave practical recommendations about what they should not see. And, late in life, Vergerio once again realized how precious the gift of sight was when Niccolò Leonardi, an intimate friend, went blind.

In all of his contributions to humanism, Vergerio never wavered in one fundamental conviction: there was no contradiction for him between his Catholic faith and his humanist endeavors. From his child-

hood, Vergerio had experienced a world-affirming Christian piety centered upon charitable deeds to those in need. That piety received peculiar expression when his family observed the feast day of Saint Jerome. For Vergerio, Jerome became both a friendly patron and a worthy exemplar of his highest ideals. Through panegyrics of Jerome, Vergerio attempted to diffuse the power of his beneficent patron. He also attempted to conform himself to Jerome's virtues of humility and detachment as he traveled the Italian world in his chosen vocation as a scholar of Latin letters. Vergerio's was a piety imbued with tolerance; he attempted to walk a fine line between commitment to the distinctive qualities of Christianity and respect for honest inquirers who lived beyond the official bounds of Christianity.⁹ Several experiences nourished the tolerant character of that piety. His father had proven an understanding mentor, especially when Vergerio decided not to marry. Such flexibility on the part of Vergerio's father in turn enlivened his own affinity for the revolutionary spirit of the comedy of Terence. Years later, when Vergerio wrote a treatise on liberal education, he made tolerance a hallmark of that work, stressing a need to adapt any program of learning to the individual's talents, inclinations, and needs.

It is no surprise, then, that Vergerio loathed expressions of Christian piety that undermined a spirit of charitable tolerance. Vergerio did not fear the potentially deleterious effects of the pagan tradition upon Christianity; rather, he feared the obviously destructive effects of zealotry, which undermined the authentic spirit of Christianity. The pious zeal of Carlo Malatesta led him to tear down a statue of Virgil. Other fanatical Christians were defacing frescoes which depicted Romans and Jews engaged in the crucifixion of Jesus. Worst of all, and symbolic of those misguided instincts, the city of Rome was subjected to incessant pillaging of the classical heritage by those acting in the name of Christian piety. To those fanatical bigots, Vergerio offered the contrary example of Saint Jerome. Using his preferred medium of classicizing oratory to celebrate Jerome in public panegyrics, Vergerio sketched a portrait of Jerome as the humanist scholar and Christian confessor. The Christian and non-Christian heritages converged in Jerome, a saintly doctor and a good man skilled in public speaking. Jerome proved himself to be a man of genuine integrity because he exemplified the high ideals that he championed.

⁹ O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, 157-60.

Vergerio's panegyrics of Jerome were consciously provocative in their medium and their message. In substance, he argued that Jerome achieved so much for the Christian community precisely because he was trained as a humanist scholar. His training gave him the philological and the rhetorical tools he needed to translate the Scriptures accurately and eloquently. When Vergerio analyzed Jerome's famous dream, he did not see it as a blanket condemnation of humanist studies but as a warning to use those studies for the various needs of the believing community. In fact, Jerome's cultural formation reflected Ciceronian emphases: he insistently sought a knowledge that was relevant to important public concerns and he insistently manifested an ethos that was persuasive to a broad range of admirers. His most compelling deeds of virtue reflected the profound detachment of an informed conscience. Jerome left Rome when his election as pope seemed assured. Jerome went to study under Gregory of Nazianzus when he enjoyed a reputation as one of the most learned scholars of the day. And Jerome overcame the temptation to return to the profligate ways of his adolescence because he had tamed the beast of his libido.

Those virtuous deeds had continuing relevance for the pressing concerns of Christians in Vergerio's time. Through the years, as Vergerio preached on Jerome, he gave his sermons an ever more prophetic edge. He advocated a greater rigor in the monastic life, endorsing goals similar to the Observant movement of the era. He urged preachers to pay greater attention to the quality of their own lives, echoing widespread dissatisfaction with the clergy's immorality. He pressed the Church's governing elite to reject clericalism, offering the primitive Christian community as a model for reform. Nor did Vergerio hesitate to depict the ways in which Jerome defied conventional wisdom. He publicly praised Jerome for his dedication to classical culture at a moment when Carlo Malatesta destroyed a statue of the poet Virgil. He denounced the tendency to measure human greatness in terms of success in warfare in an era when Giangaleazzo Visconti and his opponents embroiled Italy in constant warfare. And he applauded Jerome's willingness to forego election to the bishopric of Rome at a time when two claimants had battled for years to be recognized as the supreme pontiff.

To communicate that portrait, Vergerio chose an appropriately classicizing medium. He did not use the conventional form of preaching, which was based on the division and analysis of a single verse from Scripture. Rather, he chose to preach according to the norms of panegyric that ancient theorists had cataloged in their handbooks on rhetoric.

Indisputably, Vergerio was one of the most creative voices of the new generation of humanists. At a moment when Coluccio Salutati, revered elder statesman of the humanist movement, retreated from a full defense of humanism out of austere Christian convictions, Vergerio used a Christian hero of his childhood as a model for the committed humanist intellectual.¹⁰ One could, therefore, be humanist and Christian; in fact, in Vergerio's estimation, Jerome's pursuit of the humanities had made him that much more catholic.

¹⁰ For Salutati's retreat, see Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 6 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1983), 392-413.

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Pierpaolo Vergerio (ca. 1369–1444), a major figure in the third generation of humanists, was himself the subject of some debate among leading historians of the early Renaissance, especially Hans Baron, Eugenio Garin, and David Robey (who gave somewhat too much emphasis to the view of Vergerio as a traditionalist). In this biography, however, what emerges is Vergerio's originality as the key to both his life and works on the one hand and, on the other, to his influence on fifteenth-century humanism generally. Essentially elitist in his approach, Vergerio was deeply concerned with the need to reorient education. He believed that Scholastic logic overstressed purely intellectual training at the expense of the moral element which Vergerio himself deemed central to the worthy life. So he emphasized a trio of subjects essential to public life: moral philosophy, history, and rhetoric. At the same time, his zeal for church reform led him to the papal court where he used his position to try to influence Pope Innocent VII and later Pope Gregory XII to accept humanistic teachings as a model for Christian detachment. All in all, he exercised a broad influence in the development of humanism, particularly in the areas of epistemology, ideology, and educational curriculum, in the emphasis on ethos and its relationship to the university, to political authority, to religious belief, and to the visual arts. Finally, by emphasizing public service through oratory, Vergerio supplied a new matrix for Italian humanism.

